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NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS DECEMBER 2005

FEATURES

46 Way of the Gun
Around these parts, we shoot first and ask interview questions later.

54 On the War Path
Follow our lead as we walk you through Fire Emblem's top strategy tips.

64 Return to Babylon
In The Two Thrones, The Prince of Persia finally has a reason to be angry.

70 Inside Zelda
Takumi Kawagoe steps out from behind the camera.

74 NP Top 200
We look at some of the best games ever released, as well as a few that weren't.

78 DS Brings It! 25 World-Changers
The Nintendo DS is taking the video game experience in brand-new directions.

86 International Treasure
The usually secretive game developer opens its doors to NP.

90 Mining Orre's Pokémon
From Ledyba to Larvitar, we'll show you how to Snag in Pokémon XD.

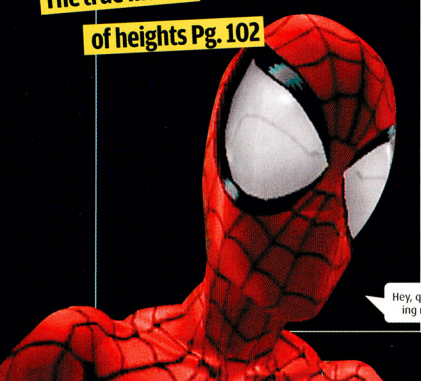
102 Bite the Big Apple
The bosses in Ultimate Spider-Man are a who's who of Marvel baddies.

54
Seriously, is there anything this game *doesn't* have?

78
Outta my way! This Yoshi is about to hatch!

64
Don't look down. Don't look down.

Gentlemen prefer purples. Pg. 90



The true master of heights Pg. 102

Hey, quit stealing my bit!

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NINTENDO POWER

Back in the USSR. You don't know how lucky you are.

CONTENTS

34
TONY HAWK FINDS LAND; MEGA MAN TAKES UP A COLLECTION; KONG GETS OFF THE ISLAND; THE MARIO BROS. TURN BACK THE CLOCK AND THROW A PARTY; HARRY BREAKS OUT THE FINE CHINA; NEED FOR SPEED MAKES A GETAWAY; AND MORE

PREVIEW

DEPARTMENTS

10 Pulse
We talk the Revolution controller, make another lame Mr. T joke, and rock out to some classic Queen.

16 News
Nothing much happened this month, unless you count the most anticipated unveiling ever in video game history.

34 Previews
Old pals Tony Hawk, Mega Man and Harry Potter stop by for a quick visit.

107 Reviews
We take a look at superheroes old (Spider-Man and X-Men) and new (Viewtiful Joe and The Incredibles)

128 Community
Andy came back from the Nintendo Fusion Tour, arms sore from all the air-guitaring he did.

134 Quiz
Feel free to insert your own Poo joke here.

136 Contacts

137 Next Month

39
Moneypenny would be so proud.

16
Mr. Iwata unveils the new game Mario Jump Rope.

120
Dude, your plastic mullet is looking totally sweet.

With my new device, I will rule the world! Pg. 16

Fall Out Boy levels the Motor City. Pg. 128

Photo by Ken Schles

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Pulse

Who Wants Pie?

Nintendo Power without strategy coverage would be like an apple pie without apples, and that would spell the end of civilization. But as eagle-eyed readers have noted, NP's strategy coverage has changed in recent months. While redesigning the magazine, we decided to limit strategy coverage to games that truly needed it, and to cover only difficult areas and particularly useful tips. No more Hamtaro language lessons. This month, we're pushing our radical agenda further with the introduction of miniguides, which condense all the useful information you need to win a game into a few brilliantly conceived pages. In this issue's Fire Emblem miniguide, you'll learn the critical importance of class changes and recruitment, as well as essential tactics to use during battles. Thusly armed with NP's new strategic weapons, you'll lay waste to the evil forces in Tellius, rid yourself of festering hamster rage and save civilization itself.

Of course, it's also our job to cover major gaming news, and this month's Revolution controller revelation will shake the very foundations of gaming. Our own Steve Thomason prowled the Tokyo Game Show to witness the historic unveiling and sneak a hands-on demo; his report leads this month's news. We also bring you feature coverage of two extraordinary titles for GCN—Activision's Gun and Ubisoft's Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones. We've got breaking news of a classic Final Fantasy title coming to GBA, an exclusive visit to Treasure's Tokyo development studio, the kick-off of Nintendo's Fusion Tour with Fall Out Boy, and the 25 most amazing things you can play, see and touch on DS. It's a special issue for our very special readers.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

REVOLUTION REACTIONS

I'm a die-hard Nintendo fan, but when I saw pictures of the Revolution's controller, I said "I'm getting an Xbox 360." Then I watched the demonstration video and . . . wow. Just wow. This might be the best thing to happen to video games since the analog stick.

Murcury7
via the Internet

After seeing the new Revolution controller online, I can't [help but] think that Nintendo's gone too far. Now it seems like they're trying to make everything weird just so they can say its innovative. The two-handed controller has survived for decades because it works. It doesn't need [to be] changed. I think Nintendo's getting a little bit out of control.

harboldjohn
via the Internet

[Regarding the Revolution controller], there are still those who are afraid of change. Change isn't always a bad thing! You simply cannot judge something by the way it looks. Sure the new controller looks funky, but it will create a totally new gaming experience.

John G.
via the Internet

[The Revolution controller] should obviously prove to be a great method of control for first-person shooters. After thinking about it, though, I realized that real-time strategy games [could finally be decent on consoles as well]. You can easily point and drag units and scroll [across] the map just by moving your hand.

boo28
via the Internet

Nintendo should make a sequel to Mario Paint! Just think, you could use the Revolution controller like a paintbrush and go right up and "paint" on the TV screen. Nintendo could release Mario Paint DS simultaneously and allow users to trade pictures wirelessly from DS to Revolution via Wi-Fi. How cool would that be?

Connor G.
via the Internet

GO, PACK, GO

I just got Madden 06 and it is incredible. So far I have only found one problem, which is that my favorite team, the Green Bay Packers, are rated lower than the Detroit Lions. I was wondering if you had any idea who is responsible for those rankings, because me and the entire state of Wisconsin would like a few words with them.

Jordan S.
via the Internet

NP's resident Minnesota Vikings fan, Steve Thomason, responds: "Have you seen the Packers play lately? They're lucky they're still in the NFL. Bwahahaha!"

TENNIS, ANYONE?

I've been replaying Golden Sun and it got me to wondering: what is Camelot up to? Are they gone forever like the great city they are named after? Are they ever going to make another Golden Sun?

Santiago G.
via the Internet

Camelot Software Planning is alive and kicking. The team just finished work on Mario Tennis: Power Tour, and a few months back, it ran a help-wanted ad in Famitsu seeking staff for development of a next-gen RPG.

PUMPING IRON

I don't think it was very nice to put Chris up against Pichu [in Volume 196]. I mean, you already knew who would win. Chris isn't that strong.

Iam4ward
via the Internet

Says you. Here's a picture of Chris with his shirt off:

THE RIGHT ROUTER

I have a question about the DS. Exactly which Wi-Fi does it use: 802.11a, 802.11b, etc.? I was thinking about possibly buying a wireless router and didn't know which frequency it used.

James S.
via the Internet

There's a bit more to it than just the frequency, but don't worry. Once the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection launches in early November, NintendoWiFi.com will have a complete listing of compatible routers. You'll also be able to order a USB adapter that connects your DS to a non-wireless router.

BURIED TREASURE

Whenever I play a video game, my personality changes to match that of the main character. Is this normal?

Bob H.
via the Internet

We don't know if it's normal, but it does happen around here from time to time. You don't want to be anywhere near Andy when he digs out his old copy of Boogerman.

GAME JAMS

[In a recent edition of Pulse], I saw someone talking about VGmix.com. That instantly reminded me of my very own favorite website for video game music, OCReMix (www.ocremix.org). This one website has stolen many a gigabyte on my hard drive—the songs remixed there are just that good. As can be expected, the more-popular games are remixed more often—there's a ton of remixes for Chrono Trigger, Mario, Zelda, Mega Man, Castlevania and the like.

Kenjoki
via the Internet

ASSORTED MATTERS

I have been wondering this for a long time: What does "Nintendo" mean in Japanese?

John V.
via the Internet

The name is actually composed of three words—Nin ten do—and means "We do what we can, as best we can, and await the results."

There are too many states. Please get rid of three.

Christopher B.
via the Internet

Does Canada count? That's a joke! We kid our friends to the north!

Can you guys make a Mr. T video game?

Max W.
via the Internet

Done and done.

>LETTER OF THE MONTH

The more I think about the Revolution's controller, the more excited I am about it. As an avid gamer, I don't think there's anything wrong with video games as they're currently played, and I definitely don't want to see "traditional" games disappear from Nintendo consoles. But that's what the classic-style controller is for. It's not like this new innovation has come at the expense of the genres we know and love. Hopefully, we'll get the best of both worlds: traditional games that build on the last 25 years of game design, as well as exciting new experiences that take advantage of the "remote" controller. And we get to revisit the classics, all on the same system. So far, so good in my opinion. Now we just need to see the games.

Randy O.
via the Internet

We hear ya, Randy. The Big N promises more Revolution announcements in the months to come. Hopefully that includes the unveiling of some software. Stay tuned.

Are there some questions you just don't want to answer?

Nate B.
via the Internet

Never.

Why doesn't Nintendo make more Dragon Ball games for the GameCube?

Goku4Life
via the Internet

On second thought.

SHROUDED IN DARKNESS?

I have a small concern about The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. I'm a little worried about how serious this game looks. I know that the N64 Zelda games were serious, but they also had that light and jolly side to them. I absolutely loved the different townspeople from Ocarina of Time and Majora's Mask. I'm afraid that Twilight Princess will be too dark to include characters like that.

Krauser_RE4
via the Internet

Fear not. Based on what we've played so far, the game is definitely darker than its predecessors, but it still has its lighter moments (especially when you're interacting with townspeople).

WHAT IN THE?

Dear Billy,

I was just writing to wish you a very special 8th birthday! I can't believe that you are already eight! It seemed like just yesterday that your mother was cleaning your diapers. You know, back in my day, we didn't have any diapers. We didn't have none of this e-mail stuff either. You should consider yourself lucky. Heck, you're the luckiest kid alive. Anyway, have a happy birthday.

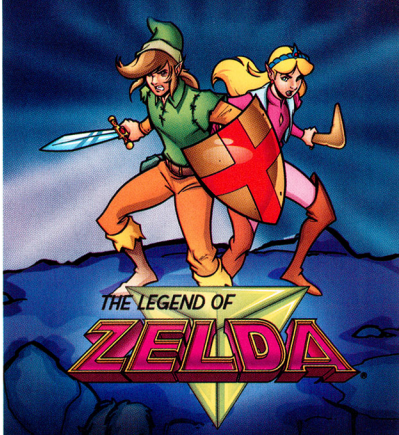
Love,
Papi and Grami

P.S. Wish Matthew luck on the baseball tryouts!

Um . . . OK. Thanks, Grami.

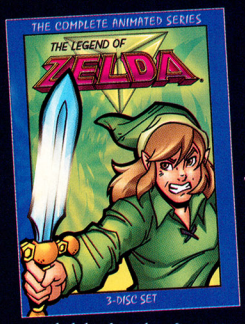
JOB REQUIREMENTS

When I graduate from college, I would love to write for a video game magazine. What sort of criteria does



The Complete Animated Series

If only gathering the tri-force were as easy as gathering our 3-DVD box.



The Legend Of Zelda: The Complete Animated Series available for the first time on DVD and packed with extras like Make Your Own Zelda and an interactive game...so you won't miss controlling the little guy too much.

And look for
Super Mario Brothers Super Show
coming soon to DVD

Available at:

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LETTERS

Nintendo Power look for when hiring new writers? Do you differentiate between English and journalism majors?

Mike B.
via the Internet

A degree in English or Journalism can definitely be a plus, but any major that involves lots of writing (history, political science) will be a big help. Beyond that, writing reviews for a website or online forum is a great way to gain relevant experience and hone your craft. It's also important to be passionate about games, of course, and to keep up on the industry. Oh—and you should be able to bench-press a Volkswagen.

CRAZY LIKE A FOX

How dare you put Tails last [on the Sonic Coolness Chart in Volume 196]?!? I know people have their own opinions, but there is no way that Knuckles, Robotnik and Sonic all beat Tails.

GameFreak333
via the Internet

We have some news that should appease the legion of angry Tails fans who wrote in this month. Due to a mysterious "accident," Tails has moved up a spot on the Sonic Coolness Chart.

IT'S YOU

I've got a bone to pick with everybody. I bought Meteos, and I had to return it because it was such a boring game! Can you please tell me why everybody keeps praising the game and giving it such good reviews?

Mike L.
via the Internet

Yes, Meteos has been universally praised because most people like to have fun. We assume you, on the other hand, enjoy kicking puppies.

WE'RE GREEN WITH ENVY

Does anyone else have any lame catchphrases for The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction? I sure do! At a drive-through restaurant, while smashing the customers, I'll say things like, "Our special today is a heaping pile of destruction." Then I found a giant burger and rolled it into a cab while shouting, "This is the burger of your demise!"

Brian M.
via the Internet

Have you ever considered running for governor of California?

COUNTDOWN COMMENTARY

I was reading the NP Top 200 in Volume 196 and I happened to observe something very disturbing. I noticed that Metroid Prime 2 Echoes was ranked #174. Let me ask you something: have you gone insane?!? Echoes is a gem, nay, a classic, yet it was rated lower than The Simpsons Road Rage. (Fun? Yes. Classic? No!) Am I missing something, or are the NP writers just getting senile?

Richard M.
via the Internet

The reason Metroid Prime 2 didn't rank higher is because . . . wait, what were we talking about?

I'm so glad Super Baseball Simulator 1.000 made your Top 200. Best baseball game I ever played.

Fernando L.
via the Internet

The most fascinating thing about the new Top 200 Games of All Time list will be seeing where the top games from the Volume 100 list and the 15th-anniversary list stand now. New games have been introduced and some classic games haven't aged as well as others. We've already seen a shocker in that your previous Worst Game of All Time didn't even make the list [in Volume 196]. I guess Bebe's Kids does grow on you if you give it time.

ToonLink
via the Internet

I'm really disappointed in your Top 200 [entry] for Volume 197. How could you possibly put Baten Kaitos at such a low rating? I know that it is after all the Top 200 Nintendo games of all time, and so it's an honor to be on the list at all, but 159 is way lower than the game deserves.

cman141
via the Internet

ROYAL TRIBUTE

I'm a huge fan of classic rock. The other day, I got my hands on your October 2005 issue and something interesting caught my eye. On your "Top 200" list, there was a game called Ogre Battle: The March of the Black Queen. This sounded familiar to me for some reason. I started looking through my CDs and sure enough, I came across a Queen album with a song called "Ogre Battle" and a song called "The March of the Black Queen."

Taylor C.
Nevada

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I just finished reading the Sept. '05 issue and wanted to comment on the article on cosplaying. As a cosplayer myself, I am ecstatic that you featured it in your magazine. I feel I need to correct you on something, though. You guys state, "Cosplaying was popularized in Japan . . . cosplaying eventually made its way to North America." Costume play actually started in the United States as early as the 1930s at science fiction conventions. It was at the 1984 Los Angeles Worldcon that Nov Takahashi created the term "cosplay" after being inspired by the costumers there.

Now you know, and knowing is half the battle.

Gordon S.
via the Internet

In Volume 197, you stated that the mystery screenshot [from the previous month's power quiz] was from Puyo Pop when it was, in fact, from Chu Chu Rocket. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

David G.
via the Internet

We are indeed. To atone for the error, we launched the offending party into space.

PLEASE WRITE US:

pulse@nintendopower.com
or via carrier pigeon at:

Nintendo Power
PO Box 97033
Redmond, WA 98073-9733

NINTENDO POWER

STAFF LIST, EH?

PUBLISHER
T. Kimishima

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Yoshio Tsuboike

MANAGING EDITOR
Scott Pelland

ART DIRECTOR
Kim Logan

SUPERVISING EDITOR
Jessica Joffe Stein

SENIOR WRITERS/EDITORS
Steven Grimm
George Sinfield

SENIOR WRITER
Steve Thomason

STAFF WRITERS
Chris Hoffman
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Reggie Fils-Aime
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ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER
Machiko Oehler

SENIOR PRODUCTION SPECIALIST
Corinne Agbunag

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Mayumi Colson

DESIGN LEAD
Jim Catechi

SENIOR DESIGNER
Tim Garret

DESIGNERS
Cory Conner
Rebekah Lane
David Waterworth

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT & CONTRIBUTING WRITER
Pete Michaud

ELECTRONIC PREPRESS
Eric Fisher

DESIGN, GAME STRATEGY & ILLUSTRATION
V-Design Inc.

V-DESIGN INC. ART DIRECTOR
Yoshi Orimo

V-DESIGN INC.
Adam Crowell
Oliver Crowell
Matt Fisher
Brian Jones
Sonja Morris
John Rice
Jill Story

BUSINESS DIRECTOR
Casey Pelkey

MARKETING MANAGER
Jeff Bafus

SALES AND MARKETING ASSISTANT MANAGER
Malinda Miller

For advertising inquiries, contact NP.ADVERTISING@NOA.NINTENDO.COM

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MOST WANTED

Go to nintendo.com to vote for your most-wanted games and let your voice be heard!

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Hungry like the wolf: Zelda fans continue to froth at the mouth in anticipation of Twilight Princess.

1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2. Shadow the Hedgehog
3. Super Mario Strikers
4. Peter Jackson's King Kong
5. Gun

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

Who wants to bet that Final Fantasy IV will take the top spot next month?

1. Mario Tennis: Power Tour
2. Dr. Mario/Puzzle League
3. Drill Dozer
4. Metal Slug
5. Pirate battle

>NINTENDO DS

Can you feel it? You're only weeks away from a global butt-whoopin' courtesy of the NP crew.

1. Mario Kart DS
2. Animal Crossing: Wild World
3. New Super Mario Bros.
4. Sonic Rush
5. Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

The only way this game wouldn't debut atop the sales chart every year is if John Madden actually came with each copy.

1. Madden NFL 06
2. Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life
3. Super Smash Bros. Melee
4. Super Mario Sunshine
5. Pokémon Colosseum
6. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
7. Sonic Gems Collection
8. Animal Crossing
9. Kirby Air Ride
10. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

Aside from Pokémon Emerald, every game on this list is a licensed property. We're not judging—it's just an observation.

1. Pokémon Emerald
2. Dragonball GT: Transformation
3. LEGO *Star Wars*
4. Disney's Kim Possible 3: Team Possible
5. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
6. Disney Princess
7. Fantastic Four
8. Madagascar
9. *Star Wars* Episode II: Attack of the Clones
10. That's So Raven 2: Supernatural Style

"All those other games suck!"

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Shouldn't the Chihuahua version be called Nintenrats?

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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HARVEST MOON
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A Lifelong Adventure!

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DOES TOUCHING MAKE BABIES?

YOU KNEW IT AS FINAL FANTASY II

NEW MOONS FINALLY RISE

VIVA LA REVOLUTION!

Taking Control

The speculation is over! Nintendo takes a bold step toward reinventing the way you play video games, and we get to go hands-on.

After months of teasing us with hints and riddles, Nintendo President Satoru Iwata finally revealed the most mysterious controller in video game history during his keynote address at this year's Tokyo Game Show. And as promised, the Revolution's controller will offer a completely new gameplay experience.

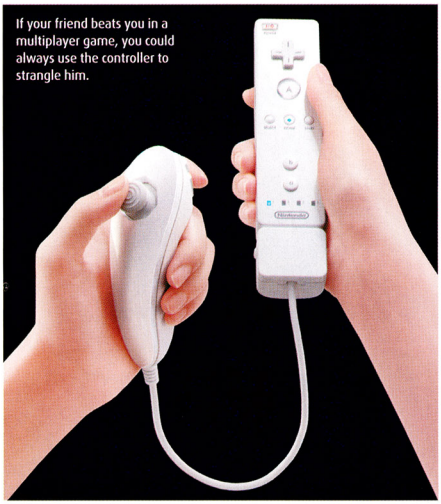
The basic unit is meant to be held in one hand like a TV remote, and features what Iwata called a "direct-pointing device," a sensor at the top of the controller that tracks its position and orientation. In other words, you can manipulate the action onscreen by physically moving the controller. You could aim your gun in a shooter by simply pointing at your target, steer your car in a racing game by tilting your wrist, or perform a sword slash in The Legend of Zelda by swinging the controller from side to side.

On the controller's face, you'll find a Power button up top (to turn the Revolution console on and off), a Control Pad and a large A button in the prime spots beneath your thumb, three buttons labeled Start, Home and Select in the middle, then "a" and "b" buttons near the bottom. Four lights at the very bottom indicate which player the controller belongs to. On the underside of the unit is a B trigger for your index finger.

An expansion port on the end of the controller gives it extra flexibility. At the show, Iwata demonstrated a second controller piece that you hold in your other hand, boasting an analog stick and two additional trigger buttons. This configuration was referred to as the "nunchaku-style" controller. The port could also be used to transform the unit into a more-traditional controller for classic-style games (including multiplatform titles like Splinter Cell). The controller is wireless, of course, and features built-in rumble functionality.

Iwata stressed that this controller will enable all users to play from the same "starting line." It will be less intimidating to those who have never played a game, while offering a fresh experience for veteran gamers. From a development standpoint, Iwata proffered that smaller studios can use the innovative interface to create new experiences without bloated budgets. And he welcomed ideas from all corners of the development community. As Iwata pointed out, the Revolution will need a wide variety of software to establish a new standard for game control. In a brief video shown during the presentation, Akitoshi Kawazu (Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles), Hideo Kojima (Metal Gear Solid) and Yuji Horii (Dragon Quest) all shared their excitement over the controller.

Prior to the keynote address, legendary game designer Shigeru Miyamoto walked your intrepid reporter through some rudimentary gameplay demos intended to showcase the controller's functionality. I used it as a rod to catch fish, manipulated a rotating stick through a series of tunnels (a la Kuru Kuru Kuririn, a Japanese GBA game) and flew a biplane through Isle Delfino from Super Mario Sunshine. Though not intended to be representative of what Revolution games will actually look like, all of the demos showed off just how intuitive the controller is, and how it will offer new and unique gameplay experiences. Finally, I got to play a brief section of Metroid Prime 2 Echoes using the nunchaku-style controller. This is what sold me (and many others who saw it) on the new interface. The analog stick controls movement as on the GCN controller, but to look around and aim your weapon, you simply point the remote in the desired direction. It works sort of like a PC-style keyboard-and-mouse configuration, and shows the enormous potential for first-person shooters on the Revolution. Evading your foes and blasting them at the same time has never been easier. I intially played the demo by waving my arm in front of the screen, but Miyamoto kindly showed me that it was much more comfortable (and effective) to simply rest the remote on my lap as I would any other controller, and aim with my wrist.


If your friend beats you in a multiplayer game, you could always use the controller to strangle him.

After the demonstration, Miyamoto stated that a number of third-party developers (besides those mentioned above) had been shown the controller, and that the response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. When Sega's Yuji Naka first saw the controller, according to Miyamoto, he got very excited and picked up one "remote" in each hand, expressing a desire to make a game that utilizes two of the units (Samba de Amigo, perhaps?). And that's what makes this new controller so intriguing. Everyone I talked to walked away with new ideas swimming in their heads. Sounds like the basis for a revolution, doesn't it? To check out a video of the controller for yourself, visit Nintendo.com.

—Steve T.

Tokyo Game Showcase

NP returns from Japan with news and hands-on impressions from the hottest games at TGS.

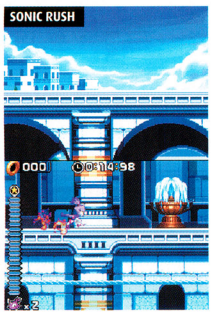
Baten Kaitos II: For Nintendo fans, perhaps the most exciting development outside of the Revolution controller was the announcement that cult-classic RPG Baten Kaitos is getting a sequel. Set 20 years before the first game, the tentatively titled Baten Kaitos II centers around a young assassin named Sagi. As a member of the Empire's elite squad tasked with spearheading the invasion of its peaceful neighbors, Sagi begins the game a somewhat less-than-admirable character. You don't play *as* the protagonist, however, but rather as a spirit who lives within him. Much like in the first Baten Kaitos, you'll give Sagi advice and help him find his true self. The epic quest promises to expand on events from the previous installment, with a number of familiar characters making an appearance, though they're 20 years younger, of course.

Also returning from the first game is the unique Magnus-card-based battle system. Unfortunately, Baten Kaitos II was shown only in video form, so additional details remain scarce. Monolith Soft is once again handling development duties, but Nintendo, not Namco, will publish the game in Japan. No word yet on a US release.

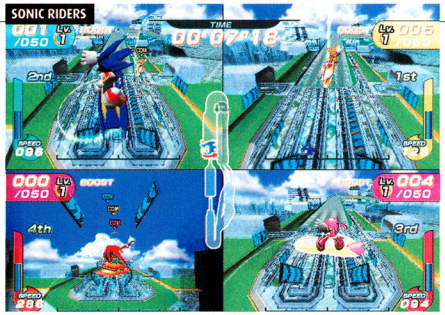
Sonic Rush: Asked why Sonic Rush reminded so many showgoers of the hedgehog's classic titles on the Sega Genesis, director Akinori Nishiyama replied, "When I was working on Sonic Advance 3, I realized that the series was getting more complicated. For the DS title, I thought maybe we should go back to basics and focus on the core of what makes a good Sonic game: fast, dynamic action." The new levels beared that out; Sonic Rush could be the fastest game in the series.

Attendees also got their hands on Blaze the Cat for the first time. The feisty feline plays much like her co-star, but she's a bit more nimble. You'll be able to pit cat and hedgehog against each other in the game's two-player wireless races. Nishiyama also revealed that Rush will feature special 3-D bonus stages in which you control Sonic or Blaze with the stylus.

2-D levels with 3-D boss battles: it's the best of both worlds.



Like its predecessor, Baten Kaitos II boasts some gorgeous prerendered backgrounds. The art style appears to be a bit grittier and more subdued than in the previous game, however.



Sonic Riders features four-player split-screen races so you can settle those Sonic Coolness Chart debates once and for all.

Super Monkey Ball should be a natural fit for the DS. Now where's our Billy Hatcher follow-up?

You don't wanna know how she scraped her knee.

Sonic Riders: Making its playable debut at the show, Sonic Riders looked promising. The sense of speed was impressive, and the game introduces a couple of unique twists on the racing formula. Your hoverboard is fueled by air, and if you run out, your racer will slow to a crawl. You can refill your tank by collecting rings or performing tricks. Each racer also leaves an airstream in his wake, which the developers are calling "turbulence." By following behind a racer, you'll receive a speed boost and the ability to jump higher, allowing you to reach otherwise-inaccessible shortcuts. Sonic Riders is slated to hit the US early next year.

Iron Feather: Konami's Iron Feather is a top-down action RPG for the DS based on a hit manga of the same name. It boasts attractive, intricately detailed hand-drawn graphics and three protagonists who can team up to unleash special combo attacks. No word on the game's fate in the US.

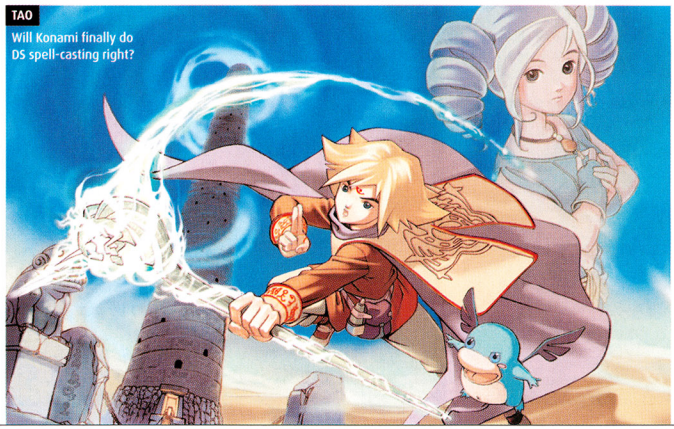
Super Monkey Ball DS: The touch screen and Super Monkey Ball seem like a match made in primate heaven. Unfortunately, the demo on display at the show offered only a trio of rather uninspired minigames: racing, air hockey and a bizarre first-person shooter. Don't worry, though; Sega claims that the main mode will offer over 100 stages for you to roll around in and collect bananas. To manipulate the action on the top screen, you'll use the stylus to scratch a 2-D version of your monkey ball on the bottom screen. We can't wait to take that part of the game for a spin. Expect Sega to announce a US release date soon.

Xenosaga I & II: Quietly announced months ago, Namco's Xenosaga DS project was finally unveiled at TGS in video form. The ambitious title is a remake of both Xenosaga Episode I and Episode II, a pair of massive RPGs that originated on the PS2. The new in-game engine exhibits 2-D sprites from an isometric view (think Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories), though developer Monolith Soft promises to include a number of the gorgeous CG cinematics featured in the console versions. The battles are turn-based, with the action playing out on the top screen while the bottom displays your stats and command options (presumably enabling touch control). Namco has yet to confirm a US launch, but given the series's popularity here, we'd be shocked if it didn't make the trip.

Where Do Babies Come From?: From catching baked goods and running away from sumo wrestlers, evidently. The follow-up to DS launch title Feel the Magic: XY/XX, Where Do Babies Come From? is even more delightfully weird than its predecessor. The game once again has you trying to win the heart of your beloved by completing an eclectic collection of oddball minigames. This time, however, several of the tasks require you to turn the DS sideways or even upside down. Sega hasn't decided whether to bring the game to this side of the Pacific.

Tao: Konami's other DS RPG wasn't nearly as attractive as Iron Feather (the polygonal environments were pretty primitive), but the gameplay mechanics are perhaps a bit more interesting. You can control the game entirely with the stylus, and your primary means of attack are spells that you cast by drawing specific shapes. No US release has been announced.

—Steve T.



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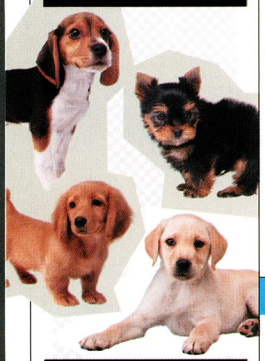
CANINE COMBO

Top Dogs Team Up

Nintendo is throwing dog fanciers a bone with a new bundle.

TWO COLORS: The limited-edition Nintendo DS Nintendogs bundle, available October 24, features your choice of two new DS colors—Teal or Pearl Pink.



BEST IN SHOW: The bundle's Best Friends edition offers the Labrador retriever, golden retriever, beagle, German shepherd, Yorkshire terrier and miniature dachshund as starter breeds.

The Big News. In Short.

Back when **Intellivision** let developers think big with 12-button control, they delivered games years ahead of their time. Now over 40 of the best early- 80s games, like Sea Battle, Astrosmash and Utopia, will rise again in a DS compilation due early next year. It will mimic the original controller via the touch screen. . . . Activision has allied with the Military Channel to produce historical vignettes that will be stowed in **Call of Duty: Big Red One**, which should bridge the gap between the Greatest Generation and current-gen systems. . . . X-Men and Spidey did it, so why not **Captain America, Avengers and Dr. Strange**? With Marvel s shocking revelation that it s secured $525 million to finance those and seven more movie projects, video game tie-ins are a near certainty. . . . *Matrix* powerhouse Laurence Fishburne and, um, fine actress Traci Lords will join other celebs lending their talents to **True Crime: New York City**, voicing an urban kingpin and a hard-workin madam, respectively. . . . Crushed that **Video Games Live** wasn t slated for your town? With 24 new dates scheduled from October through December, followed by a CD and DVD release, the high-tech symphony might be coming your way after all. Check www.videogameslive.com for the updated list of dates. . . . Publisher Marvelous has announced that it s got Grasshopper Manufacture working on **Contact**, a DS RPG due in Japan in February 2006. That s the studio that conceived of Killer 7, and though K7 director Suda is acting as producer for Contact, we re betting the game will still rank among the wildest RPGs for the DS. No word yet on making Contact in North America. Stay tuned for more details soon. —Steven G.

STOP TRYING TO HIT ME AND HIT ME

Super Friends

Help is just a touch-screen tap away in Atari's DS sequel to GBA battler Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors.

Think you know everything about the *Dragon Ball Z* sagas? Think again. Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2 has new twists for you to mull over—new clashes that support stories from the animated series along with "what if" scenarios that stray from the main storyline. We're not talking one-on-one battles, either. It's team versus team, and you have up to three Ki-powered combatants at your disposal—everyone from Goku and Piccolo to Krillin and Gotenks. During your battle to save Earth, settle a grudge or win a tourney, you can switch characters, call for quick support attacks or trigger elaborate team attacks by tapping icons on the touch screen. Since the DS has more buttons than the GBA, both the basic and special moves of your fighters are easily accessible. The game also offers an upgrade in graphic power, displaying more-spectacular blasts than ever. —George S.

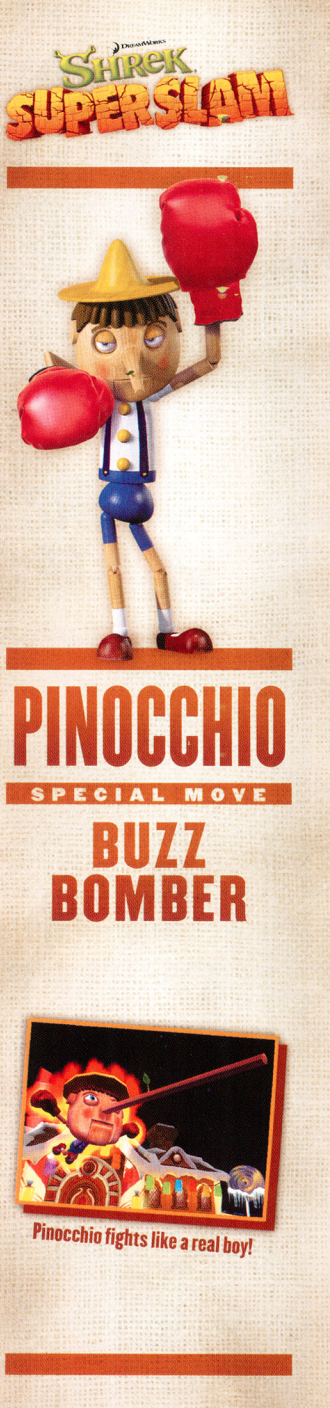
Dragon Ball Z dream teams blast through the Saga stories with Ki power surging. Victory comes to those who work together.

Compare Contrast

The poker tables are gonna be pretty crowded this fall. Now's the time to sharpen your game.

With so many new titles coming out every year, the casino-game genre is growing faster than the Las Vegas Strip. To help you separate the Carrot Tops from the Celine Dions, we've compiled a list of the upcoming gambling sims for the Nintendo DS. Whether you're brushing up for a tournament or just looking for some cheap thrills, each game has its own twist on Sin City's main attractions. —Chris S.

Name	The Big Deal	Pick Your Game
Sega Casino Holiday 2005 • Sega 	With both a collection of house games and of poker games, Sega Casino is looking to provide the broadest gambling sim available. Once you've honed your skills in single-player tournaments and in free play, you'll be able to take on up to four friends at multiple poker variations, as well as blackjack.	• Baccarat • Blackjack • Craps • Keno • Roulette • Texas Hold 'Em • 7-Card Stud • 3 Video Poker Games
Golden Nugget Casino DS November 2005 • Majesco 	Unlike the other gambling games coming out, Golden Nugget Casino DS doesn't include any forms of traditional poker. But the inclusion of Pai Gow poker and a large variety of slot-machine games makes for a well-rounded Vegas-style experience. Details about multiplayer are still vague, so look for more info in the next few months.	• The Big Six Wheel • Blackjack • Craps • Pai Gow • Roulette • 8 Slot-Machine Games • Video Blackjack • Video Poker
Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack Q4 2005 • Summitsoft 	It's called the Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack, but this title features all kinds of nongambling games. Challenge your friends to a wireless round of hearts or euchre, or let your parents play canasta at the country club while you're stuck in class. As many as eight players can join in for multiplayer action, depending on the game, of course.	• Blackjack • Canasta • Euchre • Hearts • Spades • Texas Hold 'Em • 5-Card Draw • 7-Card Stud
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS November 2005 • Majesco 	With the head-to-head view of your opponent and a selection of tells to adjust your image, Majesco is looking to capture the tension that poker is famous for. Six-player wireless action lets you test your skills with your friends, as well. But will Majesco's efforts result in an ace-high flush or a busted straight? Find out in this month's review on page 120.	• Texas Hold 'Em • 5-Card Stud • 5-Card Draw • 7-Card Stud • 7-Card Baseball



You can smash right through stained-glass windows in the haunted mansion course.

Pooka, from Dig Dug, is one of Pac-Man World Rally's guest stars.

WAKA WAKA

The Race Is On for Pac-Man and Crew

He's been around for 25 years and he's finally got his driver's license. With other Namco legends entering the race, Pac-Man World Rally could gobble up the competition.

Joining the ranks of other beloved gaming mascots like Mario and Crash Bandicoot, Pac-Man is revving up his engine for his own kart-style racing game on the Nintendo GameCube. Touted by Namco as the fastest kart-racing game ever, Pac-Man World Rally is a nitro-charged tour through numerous themed tracks based on the Pac-Man universe, including a haunted mansion where cartoon zombies and other ghouls wander about; the waterlogged Pirate Cove; an outer-space course called Lunar Launch, featuring aggressive aliens and low gravity for extrahigh jumps; and Molten Mountain, set amongst underground caves and boiling lava. World Rally also features multiplayer Battle Arena matches, in addition to the requisite weapon power-ups, which will be specifically Pac-Man-themed—such as Power Pellets that let you eat your opponents. Fourteen other Namco characters will join Pac-Man in putting the pedal to the metal, such as Ms. Pac-Man, Pac-Man Jr., those nefarious colored ghosts and Pooka from Dig Dug. Let's hope Klonoa is on the guest list. Developed by Smartbomb, Pac-Man World Rally should see the green flag drop in summer 2006. —CHRIS H.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

The gaming world has lots to buzz about this month. And the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection makes it even buzzier.

10-24

We are sooo flipping out.

Metroid Prime Pinball is one of the shocks of the season. Find out why with our review on page 109.

10-25

National holiday for The Sims 2?

Celebrate life, liberty and the pursuit of Gap-iness (or whatever your style sense is) when Sims hit GCN, GBA and DS in three different games that pledge allegiance to customization.

11-7

Mario throws a loud party.

There's no simpler way to humiliate your friends in a social setting than to spank 'em in a Mario Party. The seventh go-round for the series (and the second for mic action) will give you fresh ways to smack 'em silly.

11-14

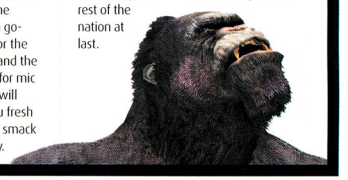
Iowa, meet Ohio. In Mario Kart DS.

Think your state is the best at Mario Kart action? If you take Mario Kart DS out for a Wi-Fi spin, you'll be able to show up the rest of the nation at last.

11-22

Two monsters of gaming roar.

You know it's a big day when Sonic Rush rushes the DS and King Kong puts a headlock on all three systems.



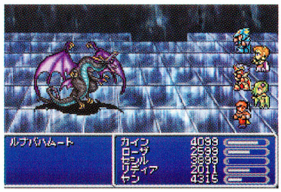
Yoshitake Amano's illustrations set the tone for Final Fantasy IV's emotional storyline.

FANTASTIC IV

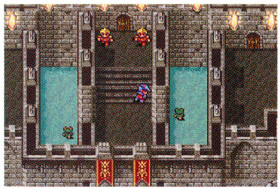
Not Final After All

The most influential RPG of its time, Final Fantasy IV, finds new life on the GBA.

Proving that RPGs were more than character-building exercises, Final Fantasy IV (released as Final Fantasy II on the Super NES in 1991) pulled players in with its deep story and dramatic flair. The tale of a dutiful knight, Cecil, who sought redemption for destroying an innocent village triggered tears in old-school gamers and paved the way for a new level of sophistication in the RPG genre. With the December 12th release of Final Fantasy IV Advance for the GBA, North American players will experience the game's full story on a Nintendo system for the first time. The game includes a restored difficulty level that was deemed too much for North American RPG newbies in the early '90s, as well as scenes and dialogue that debuted in the 2001 PlayStation version (part of Final Fantasy Chronicles). In addition, the GBA version also adds a monster encyclopedia similar to that of Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls (but updated with FFIV creatures), a music player, a training area, new interface design and an exclusive 50-floor dungeon. That's enough to make Final Fantasy fans weep with joy all over again.
—George S.



Final Fantasy IV added timing elements to the series's turn-based battles.



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Gingy's bringing the pain with the candy cane!

GCN and DS Reap Harvest

Two ground-breaking Harvest Moon titles (one for GCN, one for DS) are headed for North American soil.

That's right, folks—you heard it here first. Harvest Moon: Magical Melody for GCN and Harvest Moon DS are on their way across the Pacific. And what's more, both titles offer a number of features totally new to HM's already-bizarre universe. (Don't fret, Harvest Moon purists—the games stay true to their roots, too.)

At first glance, Magical Melody looks like a throwback to Harvest Moon 64 (which many believe to be the best game in Natsume's beloved farming franchise) due to its art style and fixed camera angle (a la Animal Crossing). But the upcoming GCN title has something that most Harvest Moon games, including HM64, lack: a definitive goal. Rather than having little to no direction, you'll be recruited by the familiar Harvest Sprites to save the Harvest Goddess (who has been turned to stone) by collecting Musical Notes throughout the game. However, there's plenty of food to grow, animals to raise and mates to woo—these objectives are just cleverly worked into the game's plot.

Furthermore, rather than waiting to release a girl version of the game, Natsume will offer you the choice of playing through Magical Melody as a boy or a girl from the start. In addition, Natsume has included some healthy competition in the form of a rival farmer. Each day, your productivity will be judged against your rival's. And the competition doesn't end there—Magical Melody offers a slew of strange minigames, many of which can be experienced in four-person multiplayer mode.

Harvest Moon DS feels more familiar than the GCN game, returning players to Forget-Me-Not Valley (the town from Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life) and bringing back characters from both A Wonderful Life and Friends of Mineral Town. Stylistically, the game looks similar to Friends of Mineral Town, but the DS's second screen offers a variety of new ways to go about your daily business. Conversations and menus have been moved to the lower screen, which offers some unique touch features as well. And Natsume promises "many surprises" that can be unlocked by inserting a Harvest Moon GBA pak into your DS. Though both new Harvest Moon outings look to be worthwhile affairs, we'll have to wait until early 2006 to get back in touch with our rural roots.

—Andy M.

Menus don't break up the action in Harvest Moon DS. Select tools and other items using the touch screen.

It's a wonderful life in Forget-Me-Not Valley.

Does touching a cow's udders gross you out? In Harvest Moon DS, chores such as milking cows and shearing sheep can be accomplished using touch control.

Favorite Harvest Moon pastimes such as fishing and courting a love interest are back in Harvest Moon: Magical Melody, but you can experience them as either a boy or a girl.

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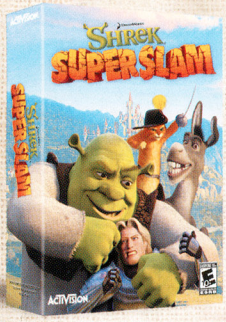

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GAME WATCH FORECAST

We're going to go way out on a limb and guess what you're doing this month: playing new games, maybe? Check out what's ready for you.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

American Chopper: Full Throttle	Activision	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●●
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	Activision	●○○
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	Activision	●●●
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	Activision	●●○
Chaos Field Expanded	0-3	●●○
Chibi Robo	Nintendo	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●●●
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	Nintendo	●●●
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●●
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●●
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	Activision	●○○
Gun	Activision	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	Natsume	●●○
James Bond 007: From Russia with Love	EA	●●○
Karaoke Revolution Party	Konami	●●○
Kirby®	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO Star Wars The Video Game	Eidos	●●●
Mario Party 7	Nintendo	●●○
Mark Davis Pro Bass Challenge	Natsume	●●●
Mega Man X Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
The Movies	Activision	●●○
NBA Live 06	EA	●●●
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●○
NHL 06	EA	●●●
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●●
Nintendo Pennant Chase Baseball	Nintendo	●●○
Odama	Nintendo	●●○
Pac-Man World 3	Namco	●●○
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	Ubisoft	●●○
Rampage: Total Destruction	Midway	●●○
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco	●●○
Shadow the Hedgehog	Sega	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Sonic Riders	Sega	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●●○
SSX on Tour	EA	●●●
Starcraft: Ghost	VU Games	●●○
Super Mario Strikers	Nintendo	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft	●○○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 4*	Ubisoft	●○○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●●
True Crime: New York City	Activision	●●○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	Activision	●●●
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●●
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○
World Series of Poker	Activision	●●○
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	Activision	●●●
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	Bandai	●●●

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Atomic Betty	Namco	●●●
Backyard Skateboarding	Atari	●●●
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●●
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●●
Disney's Cinderella: Magical Dreams	Disney	●●○
Disney's That's So Raven 2	Disney	●●○
Disney's The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Donkey Kong Country 3	Nintendo	●●●
Dr. Mario/Puzzle League	Nintendo	●●○
Drill Dozer	Nintendo	●●○
Driv3r	Atari	●●●
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	Atari	●●●
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
everGirl	THQ	●●●
The Fairly OddParents!*	THQ	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	EA	●●●
Final Fantasy IV Advance	Nintendo	●●○
Gunstar Super Heroes	Sega	●●●
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●●○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
LEGO Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	THQ	●●●
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	Nintendo	●●○
Mega Man Anniv. Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Zero 4	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●○○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●●
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	Activision	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Sky Dancers®	Crave	●○○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●●○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●●
Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	Disney	●●●
Tony Hawk's American SkBland	Activision	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Trollz: Hair Affair	Ubisoft	●●○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Arcade Games	Telegames	●●●
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●●
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Winx Club	Konami	●●○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Blades: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○

NINTENDO DS

A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	Majesco	●●○
Animal Crossing: Wild World	Nintendo	●●○
ATV Quad Fury 2	Majesco	●●○
Barnyard	THQ	●○○
Battles of Prince of Persia®	Ubisoft	●●○
Black & White Creatures	Majesco	●●○
Blades of Thunder 2	SummitSoft	●●○
Boktai®	Konami	●○○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1®	Ahuze	●●○
Burnout Legends	EA	●●○
Bust-a-Move DS	Majesco	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●○○
Dig Dug: Digging Strike	Namco	●●●
Disney/Pixar's Finding Nemo®	THQ	●○○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	Disney	●●●
Disney's Lizzie McGuire & That's So Raven®	Disney	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2	Atari	●●○
Dragon Booster	Konami	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters®	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors®	Koei	●○○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Electroplankton	Nintendo	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	EA	●●●
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●○○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles®	Square Enix	●○○
Fushigi No Dungeon®	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Golden Nugget Casino DS	Majesco	●●○
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi®	D3PA	●○○
Historical Simulation Game®	Koei	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band®	Nintendo	●●●
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Legend of the River King®	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords®	Nintendo	●○○
Mah-Jong®	Koei	●○○
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Kart DS	Nintendo	●●○
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	●●●
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	Capcom	●●●
Metroid Prime Hunters	Nintendo	●●○
Metroid Prime Pinball	Nintendo	●●●
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables®	Majesco	●○○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●○
New Super Mario Bros.®	Nintendo	●●○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●●
Nintendogs: Best Friends Edition	Nintendo	●●●
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●○○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	Namco	●●●
SBK: Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●●
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	Activision	●○○
Secret of Mana®	Square Enix	●○○
Sega Casino	Sega	●●○
Shin Megami Tensei DS®	Atlus	●○○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Slime Mebimori Dragon Quest®	Square Enix	●○○
Sonic Rush	Sega	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	●●●
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	VU Games	●●●
Super Princess Peach	Nintendo	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●●
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	Majesco	●●●
Tamagotchi: Corner Shop®	Bandai	●●○
Tony Hawk's American SkBland	Activision	●●○
Top Gun	Mastiff	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Touch Golf DS®	Nintendo	●●○
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	Atlus	●●●
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●●
Vandal Hearts™	Konami	●○○
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	Capcom	●●●
Whac-A-Mole	Activision	●●○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven®	Konami	●○○
Worms™	THQ	●●○

* TENTATIVE TITLE

NEW DEVELOPMENTS!

TAMAGOTCHI TALE

Back when we heard that a Tamagotchi DS game was in the works, we had happy thoughts about virtual pet games. And then we found out Tamagotchi: Corner Shop, due in early '06, is instead a youngish shop sim driven by minigames. We were sad. Then we saw that it's made by the cool PaRappa the Rapper guys. Then we had very happy thoughts again. The end!

The 10-plus careers in Corner Shop, done via touch, include cakemaking and dentistry.

MARIO IN ARCADES

You got your chocolate in my peanut butter! This November, Mario's goin' DS-karting. Next spring, Pac-Man's karting on the GCN. But in October, both characters lock fenders in Mario Kart Arcade GP. The Namco-Nintendo collaboration brings in 11 characters (Peach vs. Ms. Pac-Man throwdowns!) on 24 courses that span six worlds. Fuel up, head out!

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title — Publisher — ●●●

Game Title — Publisher — ●●● — New games added to the list

TWO JOES ARE BETTER THAN ONE!

VIEWTIFUL JOE™ RED HOT RUMBLE

FOR THE NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

Captain Blue is casting for the lead in his new action movie and the competition is Red Hot!

- *Electrifying Single and Multiplayer Action!*
- *Score points by skillfully using VFX Powers!*
- *Intense Head-to-Head Fighting!*

"...this one's a winner." –IGN

When a mysterious crime syndicate descends on the set of Captain Blue's newest movie and makes off with the film, Joe rushes to the rescue.

- *Zoom in on the action to solve mind-bending puzzles!*
- *Split the lower screen to move objects and overcome obstacles!*

VIEWTIFUL JOE™ DOUBLE TROUBLE!™

FOR THE NINTENDO DS™

NOVEMBER 2005

New series Saturdays on

TEEN T Cartoon Violence Suggestive Themes CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NINTENDO DS™ NINTENDO GAMECUBE CLOVER STUDIO

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customize your LOOKS, DECK and TRICKS - all in game

EXCLUSIVE SOUNDTRACK FEATURING MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE, FALL OUT BOY AND TAKING BACK SUNDAY COVERING PUNK CLASSICS!

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TEEN
T
Blood
Crude Humor
Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence
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PlayStation.2

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TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

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NINTENDO GAMECUBE. XBOX XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED XBOX 360. POWERED BY gamespy. NEVERSOFT ACTIVISION.

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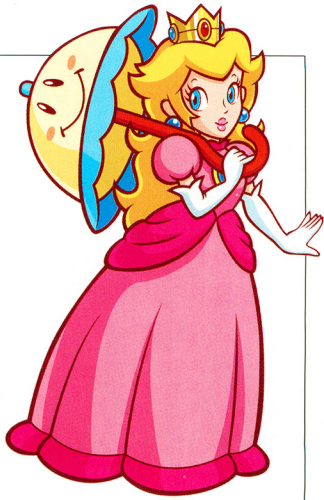
activision.com

GAME, SET & MATCH

TEST YOUR GAMING RELATIONSHIP

OK, so Nintendogs has finally convinced your significant other to give video games a try, but what's the next step in getting her* completely hooked on your favorite hobby? Well, that depends on how enthusiastically she's taking to the gaming scene. To help gauge her interest, we've listed 12 situations below, along with four highly probable responses for each. Just choose her likely response, check the results on the accompanying table, and voilà!—a foolproof guide toward gaming-couple bliss.



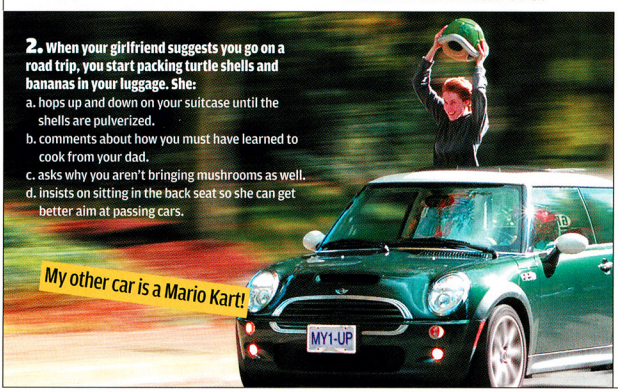
** For our female readers with gaming-impaired boyfriends, we apologize for the constant use of words like her and girlfriend. Just pretend it says him and boyfriend or whatever, and everything should be just peachy. Although it sure would make question #4 weird.*

1. You're about to stick in Resident Evil 4 for a speed run with the Chicago Typewriter. Your girlfriend:

a. mentions that you almost flunked typing class because you play too many video games.
b. asks you the three places evil resided before Chicago.
c. points out that real gamers play on Professional mode.
d. puts a burlap bag on her head, runs to the shed and starts up the chainsaw.

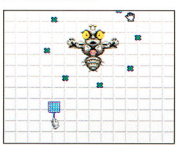
2. When your girlfriend suggests you go on a road trip, you start packing turtle shells and bananas in your luggage. She:

a. hops up and down on your suitcase until the shells are pulverized.
b. comments about how you must have learned to cook from your dad.
c. asks why you aren't bringing mushrooms as well.
d. insists on sitting in the back seat so she can get better aim at passing cars.



3. You ask your girlfriend to edit your art-class midterm essay on the impact of Mario Paint on American culture. She:

a. thinks you've "been inhaling some Mario Paint, if you know what I mean."
b. changes all instances of the phrase "Mario Paint" to "Etch A Sketch."



c. forgets to do it because she spends the afternoon playing the fly-swatting minigame instead.
d. says you shouldn't disregard the impact of Virgin Interactive's Color a Dinosaur either.

4. For your girlfriend's birthday, you buy her a pink dress, parasol and tiara, then you put on a red shirt and blue overalls and invite her to a nice restaurant. What happens?

a. She tells you to save it for Halloween.
b. She brings only the parasol, which comes in handy when you're asked to fix the plumbing.
c. When you arrive at dinner, you find a note saying, "Your princess is in another castle."
d. Everything goes great until she tries to float.

5. Instead of buying her a heart-shaped necklace for Valentine's Day, you ask her to get matching Triforce tattoos with you. She:

a. says she's not into *Star Wars*.
b. wonders who the other force in your relationship is—you two form only a biforce.
c. says she'd prefer some Triforce bling.
d. shows you that she already has a Triforce tattoo, not to mention Toad, Samus and . . . is that Wario?

6. You haven't taken the *Smashing . . . Live!* CD out of your player for six weeks. The next time you hit the play button, your girlfriend:

a. sticks chewing gum in her ears.
b. says the album would be so much better if performed by 50 Cent.
c. suggests listening to your imported Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles soundtrack instead.
d. headbangs to the Mach Rider tune, like always.

YOU KNOW THEIR NAMES. NOW PLAY THEIR GAME!

Coming November 2005!

Who is Ed's bossy baby sister?

_

The dead-end street where the Eds live is a _-de-sac.

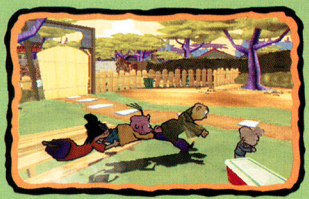
_

Jonny 2x4's best friend is a ____.

Eddy knows the secret recipe for the El ____ Stink Bomb.

Go to www.midwaycartoon.com and enter the secret code from above to unlock more Mis-Edventures.

Ed, Edd n Eddy™ THE MIS-EDVENTURES



EVERYONE E Cartoon Violence Crude Humor ESRB

PlayStation.2 XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE GAME BOY ADVANCE PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE CARTOON NETWORK INTERACTIVE

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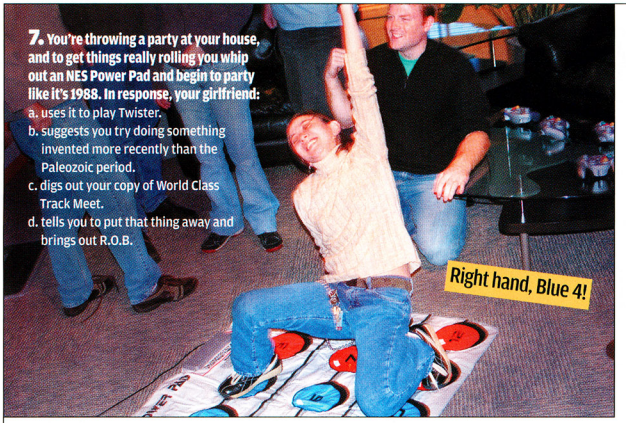
MIDWAY

answer: sarah, cal, plank, mongo.

7. You're throwing a party at your house, and to get things really rolling you whip out an NES Power Pad and begin to party like it's 1988. In response, your girlfriend:

a. uses it to play Twister.
b. suggests you try doing something invented more recently than the Paleozoic period.
c. digs out your copy of World Class Track Meet.
d. tells you to put that thing away and brings out R.O.B.



8. Entering the third hour of your exploring the possibilities of the Revolution controller over dinner, your girlfriend finally:

a. falls asleep face-first in the lasagna.
b. shoves a WaveBird in your mouth, sideways, to shut you up.
c. exclaims that Revolution would be perfect for a Hogan's Alley sequel.
d. tells you you're ignoring how cool a Revolution-controlled Zelda fishing minigame would be.

9. You walk out of the bathroom carrying the latest copy of Nintendo Power. Glancing down at the issue, she says:

a. "Oh! David Hasselhoff!"
b. "That green guy in the overalls is kinda cute."
c. "Any news on a Billy Hatcher sequel?"
d. "Why'd they ever get rid of the manila folders in Classified Information?"

10. At your girlfriend's family reunion, you slip and call her grandmother "Wrinkly Kong" to her face. Your girlfriend:

a. is confused and horrified, and won't speak to you for days.
b. explains to Grandma that you haven't taken your medication yet.
c. tells you to shut it and go play with her cousin Kiddy.
d. presents Wrinkly with a new pair of dentures and two crates of bananas.

11. You blow off your plans to go to the mall with your girlfriend because you're too busy playing the final game of a full season of MVP Baseball 2005. She:

a. "accidentally" loses your Memory Card.
b. explains the intricacies of the Pause button.
c. contemplates playing Diva Starz: Mall Mania instead, but thinks better of it.
d. forgets the mall, grabs a bag of chips, breaks out the foam hand and sits back to watch the game.

12. You take your girlfriend to the zoo, then complain that there's no Goomba exhibit and that all the Klap Traps were in their caves. She:

a. explains they're probably endangered.
b. tells you they're kept with the unicorns.
c. helps you paint the hedgehogs blue as consolation.
d. isn't paying attention, as she's busy jumping on turtles to knock them out of their shells.

Know the Score

Now that you've analyzed these highly realistic scenarios, it's time to tally the total. Just award one point for each "a" answer picked, two points for each "b," three points for every "c" and four points for each "d." Easy, huh? Now we turn to our scientifically proven Matchmaker 3000 for the results:

18 and lower: Things aren't looking so hot. Puppy sims are probably your best bet for now. If you try to play anything more complex than Meteos, you're asking for trouble.

19-30: You're making progress, but you'd best stick to something casual, like Donkey Konga, Mario Party 7 or Mario Kart DS. You can try team-sports games like Mario Superstar Baseball if she's into that.

31-42: You're definitely ready for the next step. If she's ready to go solo, a quality game like WarioWare: Touched! or Super Mario Sunshine is the ticket, or you can keep her company with games like The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures or X-Men Legends 2.

43 and up: She can probably kick your butt at Soul Calibur II, and you're an idiot for not noticing sooner. Get her Metroid Prime 2 Echoes, Viewtiful Joe, Gunstar Super Heroes and a wedding ring ASAP.

And there you have it!

Now if your next romantic gaming evening doesn't go as planned, you have nothing to blame but your own ineptitude. Good luck with that.

HEART SURGERY AND TUMOR REMOVAL MIGHT LOOK EASY FROM THE MORPHINE END, BUT HOW DO YOU THINK THE DOCTOR FEELS? WELL, YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT!

"...THE COOLEST THING I'VE SEEN WITH THE TOUCH-SCREEN YET..."
- GAMESPY

"...TRAUMA CENTER REALLY SHINES IN THE WAY IT MIMICS THE EXCITEMENT AND PACING OF REAL-WORLD OPERATIONS..."
-GAMESPOT

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This razor sharp instrument is the doctor's main weapon. Use it to make incisions or remove tumors and other objects that don't belong in the human body.

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The pinnacle of technology in modern medicine. The laser can eradicate even the most malignant of tumors. Be careful when wielding it, as powerful as it is, you might cause more harm than good with one missed stroke.

THE NINTENDO DS™ PUTS YOU ABOVE THE OPERATING TABLE WITH 10 DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS AT YOUR SURGICAL DISPOSAL. AS DR. DEREK STILES, YOU'LL EXPERIENCE ALL THE DRAMA WE'VE COME TO EXPECT FROM THE MEDICAL FIELD. SO GO AHEAD, TOSS ON SOME SCRUBS AND STEP INTO THE O.R. —IT'S TIME TO PLAY DOCTOR.

TEEN
T
Blood
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Partial Nudity
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

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Tony Hawk, Harry Potter, James Bond and Mario (x 3)—Fall releases are in full force.

Tony Hawk's American Sk8land Pg. 34
Mega Man X Collection Pg. 34
From Russia with Love Pg. 39
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time Pg. 36
Mario Party 7 Pg. 40
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire Pg. 38
Need for Speed: Most Wanted Pg. 42
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Pg. 44
Dr. Mario and Puzzle League Pg. 44

Gr8 Grinds

>TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND

PLATFORM: DS/GBA • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS • RELEASE: NOV. 2005

From wallplants to face plants, Activision's Tony Hawk skateboarding series has always had the moves. With American Sk8land for the DS, the series makes a huge move—to cyberspace. Hopping onto the DS Wi-Fi bandwagon, American Sk8land allows sk8r boys the world over to go head-to-head and upload scores, stats and even ghosts that show a skater's path through the game's seven California-based locations. Finally, your friends across the continent will be able to see and try to keep up with your skating skills.

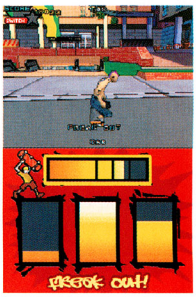
Mirroring the main features of the recent American Wasteland GCN title (customizable characters, line-loaded locations), American Sk8land is a return to THPS form, forgoing THUG's outlandish stunts for a purer skating experience. Though you can transition from one area to the next in the DS game as you do in the GCN title, the layouts and some of the destinations differ in the DS title. While Wasteland is centered in L.A., Sk8land travels to Alcatraz in San Francisco, and a Vans-themed skate park. Another location, the Sk8land Warehouse, evolves as you earn cash and buy pieces for it. The 3-D play on the DS version's top screen is rendered in a cel-shaded style that is new to the franchise, but it fits with its famous larger-than-life tricks and big air.

Sound effects are specifically designed for the DS, too. You can record your own samples to play during special-trick execution, and listen to 13 punk tracks from the likes of Green Day ("Holiday"), Black Flag ("Rise Above") and The Dead Kennedys ("California Uber Alles").

The Game Boy Advance version follows the same 2-D scheme as previous GBA Tony Hawk titles developed by Vicarious Visions, but adopts the Sk8land cel-shaded art style. It also features seven locations, such as Hollywood, Cohoes and the Vans Skate Park, and an open-skate-oriented story mode. Both handheld versions include Classic mode, which challenges you to accomplish goals within a time limit, and multiplayer modes such as Trick Attack and Horse.

Throughout their history, the Tony Hawk titles have pushed the freestyle-sports genre to new extremes. Now the Sk8land games—especially the DS version—catch big air with innovation and originality. —GEORGE S.

The DS's top screen shows a 3-D view. The bottom screen displays a map and touch-sensitive special-moves triggers.



A touch-triggered minigame lets you recover points from spills.

If you're going to be a skater, you've got to look the part.

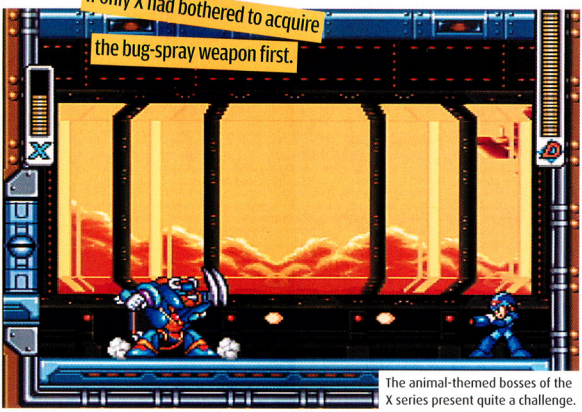
The Bert Slide is a new trick for all of the latest Tony Hawk titles; also new are variations of the top-of-a-hydrant Natas Spin.

X-Games

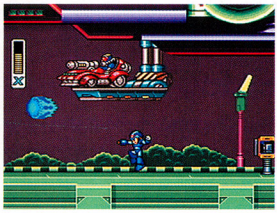
>MEGA MAN X COLLECTION

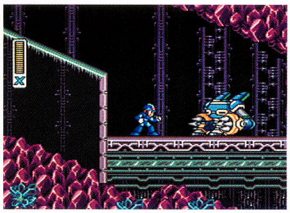
PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • RELEASE: HOLIDAY 2005

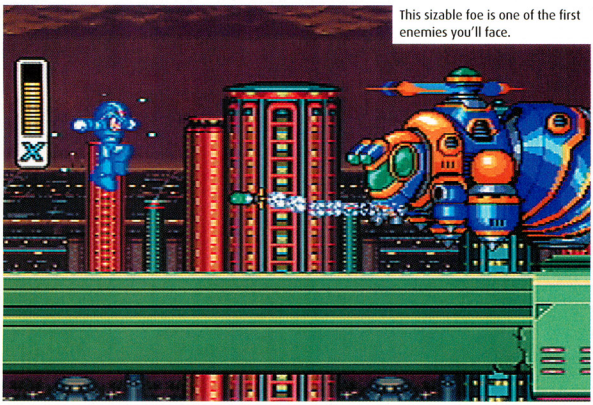
Already conquered all three versions of Mega Man Battle Network 5? Itching for more action after blasting through Mega Man Zero 4? Then Capcom has just the thing for you: Mega Man X Collection. Offering the first six chapters of the X-cellent Mega Man X series—three from the 16-bit era, three from 32-bit times—this anthology chronicles the adventures of Mega Man X and his tragic partner Zero as they battle the evil Sigma and his army of Maverick mechanoids. Though the X series adds new elements to the Mega Man mythos, like the ability to climb walls and equip various armor upgrades, at their cores the games feature the same appealing hook as the original Mega Man titles: the ability to steal the enemy bosses' weapons. Not only do the weapons let you exploit other bosses' weaknesses, but they can affect the environment and open otherwise-hidden areas. Each entry in the collection also adds new nuances to the gameplay, like the introduction of an air dash move in X2 and multiple armor types in X5. In addition, MMXC includes Mega Man Battle & Chase—a kart-style racer that's never been released previously in North America—and bonus content such as Mega Man X artwork. Considering the quality of the original games, we have high hopes for this compilation. —CHRIS H.



The animal-themed bosses of the X series present quite a challenge.

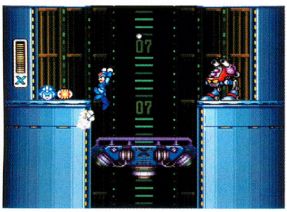






This sizable foe is one of the first enemies you'll face.

Man, what is up with Sigma's obsession with robot insects?



Timeless Adventure

>MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: ALPHA DREAM • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

It all started when that wacky scientist Professor E. Gadd created a time machine powered by a special Cobalt Star. No, actually it began many years before that, when a young Prince Bowser tried to kidnap a baby Princess Peach right before baby Mario's and baby Luigi's eyes. Er, wait. Maybe it all began when a bunch of creepy, purple mushroom-shaped creatures from the planet Shroob decided they needed a new home and invaded the Mushroom Kingdom. Truthfully, the specifics don't matter. What matters is that it all adds up to a time-twisting RPG in which Mario and his ever-abused brother, Luigi, team up with their baby selves to rescue Princess Peach, thwart the alien attack and collect the Cobalt Star shards needed to do both.

As in the original Mario & Luigi title, Superstar Saga, the brothers will be able to use their many abilities to traverse the world's tricky terrain—from the tropical paradise of Yoshi's Island to the sweltering peaks of Thwomp Volcano to the shining pathways of Star Hill—but things are a bit different this time, due in no small part to the tots riding on Mario and Luigi's backs. The bros can toss the babies from their backs at any time, granting the tykes access to out-of-reach areas, and each duo has distinct powers. The adults, for example, have their Ball Bros. move, which turns the pair into a multipurpose spinning sphere; the young 'uns use a spitting move in which little Luigi hammers his brother on the noggin to make him spew water. (We don't recommend trying this in real life.)

The quartet can also team up in battle using Bros. Items (which replace the Bros. Attacks from the previous game) that let you multiply your offensive power through chains of timed button hits. These item-based attacks include Bro Flowers, which the boys use to nail their foes with waves of fireballs; Smash Eggs, which the bros smack back and forth into enemies, volleyball-style; and the Pocket Chomp, in which a Chain Chomp chases one of the siblings around the screen, clobbering enemies in the process. The brothers will need every advantage they can get, too—the Shroob menace includes a variety of impressive, innovative bosses.

Like its predecessor, Partners in Time features a fantastic localization (witness the Hammer Bros., who indulge in self-mockery after talking in L33T-speak) and plenty of nods to past Mario games. Partners in Time is clearly another great adventure in the making.
—CHRIS H.

Partners in Time's new Bros. Items should come with a "baby on board" sign.

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Fire Fighter

>HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

PLATFORM: DS/GBA • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA UK
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

Departing from the RPG adventures of GBA titles past, the DS and GBA versions of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire are packed with action, and the attack spells are flying. The single-player adventure in both versions follows friends Harry, Ron and Hermione from the Death Eaters' opening blitz at the World Quidditch Cup campsite to the face-off against Voldemort at the Riddle family gravesite. Along the way Harry participates in the Triwizard Tournament and the Hogwarts students even find time to go to class. The bulk of the game's 11 levels show an isometric view of the trio taking on Dugbogs, Bowtruckles, Red Caps, Salamanders and other creatures from the *Harry Potter* book series in huge areas in and around the school. At the beginning of the level you select which character you'll control directly; the others will offer help in fighting enemies and lifting heavy objects. The characters have identical magical abilities, but they vary in attack power, speed and defensive strength. To advance from one area to the next, you must defeat the enemies, move objects and solve simple puzzles—fix a broken block using Repairo, for example, and use it as a stepping stone to cross a stream.

Providing a break from the battles are the rhythm-game-style Yule Ball level and the Triwizard tasks, which have Harry flying and swimming through physical challenges. Both the DS and GBA versions offer multiplayer options. In the GBA game, players race each other through the Triwizard events and compete in the Yule Ball. In the DS version, players can duel each other and connect for Care of Magical Creatures sessions. The Magical Creatures side game has similarities to the Chao minigames that appear in several Sega titles and is also a slight nod to Nintendogs: you can pet your Niffler or Blast-Ended Skrewt using the touch screen, and toss toys to them.

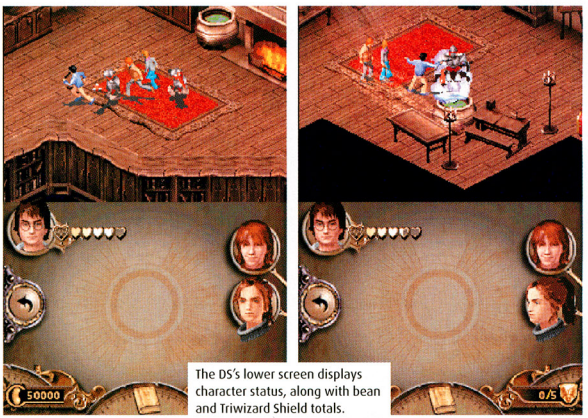
The touch screen is integral to the DS version's dueling bonus game, too. Some enemies trigger a one-on-one interface that sets up a turn-based battle. When it's your turn to attack, you choose between three types of magic. One attack requires you to trace wavy lines on the touch screen. The others challenge you to tap or connect magical bursts on the screen.

The game's replay value on both platforms comes from the collection of cards and bonus-unlocking Triwizard Shields. You can return to areas that you've already cleared to search for the items.

Like the GCN version, the two handheld games are set to launch a week before the film's November 18th opening.

—GEORGE S.

Your stylus is a magic wand in DS duels, both during the adventure and in two-player matches.



The DS's lower screen displays character status, along with bean and Triwizard Shield totals.

Wingardium Leviosa plays a big part in both the GBA (pictured) and DS versions of the game. Lifting very heavy objects requires AI assistance.

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Cold-War Classic

>FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA REDWOOD SHORES • RELEASE: FALL 2005

To shake (not stir) things up a bit, EA has broken into the movie vault to find the basis of this year's James Bond game, From Russia with Love. The game follows the same story as the 1963 spy classic, but adds locations and characters to round out the interactive experience. One thing that hasn't changed from the movie is the incomparable talent of Sean Connery. Connery provides new voice work for the game, and lends his iconic image to the famed superagent. Adding their own talents to the production, pop singer Natasha Bedingfield and actress Maria Menounos voice the parts of the ubiquitous Bond girls.

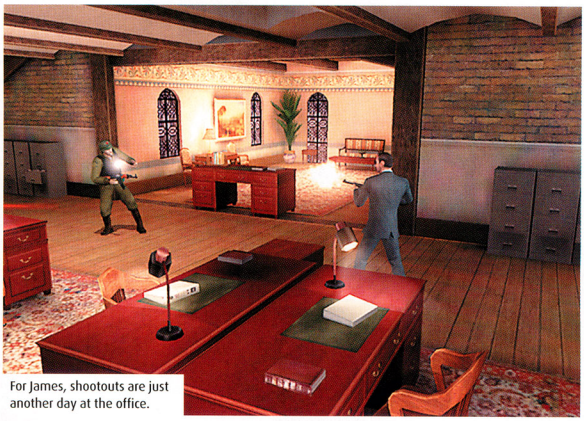
In the early gameplay we've seen, the cinematic quality of the game is outstanding. Smooth cut-scenes highlight famous moments from the film, as well as show off amazing production quality for a video game; for example, realistic sound effects accompanying a fight between two of the main characters in a dining car add incredible depth to the scene.

After EA's brief (and not very well-received) return to a traditional first-person view in GoldenEye: Rogue Agent, James Bond once again steps in front of the camera for From Russia with Love (the game uses the same control style as the monster hit James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing).

But From Russia with Love isn't just Everything or Nothing with new characters and locations. Depending on how well you perform in a level, such as how quickly you complete the mission and how many enemies you take out, you'll earn skill points that you can cash in to open extra features. The extras include behind-the-scenes video clips of the making of the game, and unlockable multiplayer characters. Bond isn't only about shooting bad guys and rescuing beautiful women, either—he actually does a little spy work once in a while. Secret documents you'll find around the levels earn you research points and allow you to upgrade your weapons in categories such as firing speed and ammo capacity.

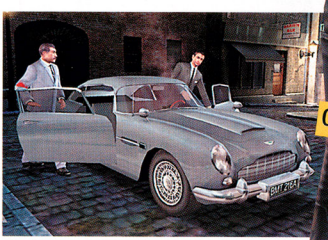
It wouldn't be a Bond game without awesome gadgetry and cool vehicles. From Russia with Love loads you up with the latest technology, from laser watches to remote-controlled helicopters. Additionally, you'll find yourself roaring through the streets of Budapest in Bond's custom Bentley, blasting off into the night strapped to a jet pack or manning a mounted machine gun on the back of a speedboat.

Look forward to reliving the legendary movie later this year. —CHRIS S.



For James, shootouts are just another day at the office.

Nobody's ever looked better firing a gun in a white tuxedo than 007.



Minigame Gala

>MARIO PARTY 7

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: HUDSON SOFT • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

Call your friends, stock up on seven-layer dip and crank up the music—it's time for another Mario Party. All the cool kids are coming: Mario, Yoshi, Princess Peach, Toad and Toadette (hubba hubba). Oh yeah; Luigi and a few others will be there too, and even two newcomers have been invited—Birdo and Dry Bones—although you might need to do something special to make them show. There's gonna be games and a live mic, and I hear they've got a gorilla hosting his own festivities. (You can't have a proper party without a party gorilla.) That Bowser jerk will try to crash the scene, but riling him up by thwarting his plans is half the fun. Well, maybe a third.

If you've been to one of these bashes before, then you pretty much know the drill: hit the Dice Block, move across the board, collect coins, buy stars and engage in all manner of minigames. The minigames are what Mario Party has always been about, and this edition has more than 80, including such bizarre offerings as Buzzstormer, where you race mechanical bees through a forest of dandelions, and Hop-O-Matic 4000, in which you have to press the correct button sequence to control an unwieldy robot.

As in previous Mario Party titles, minigames come in numerous varieties, including three-on-ones, two-on-twos, four-way free-for-alls, special DK-themed minigames (such as Jump, Man—a barrel-hopping obstacle course reminiscent of the original Donkey Kong game) activated by landing on DK spaces, voice-controlled minigames that use the included mic, and punishing Bowser minigames that threaten to steal your hard-earned booty. But most promising of all are the new eight-player minigames, which have two players sharing each controller; this mode has awesome potential at real-life parties.

Adding extra spice to the proceedings is a Bowser meter that grows after each round of play. When it fills up (every six turns or so), the testy Koopa king releases his rage in any number of ways: stealing coins, taking stars or otherwise messing with the game board (like replacing safe spaces with Bowser-game spaces). If that weren't trouble enough, Koopa Kid spaces also cause trouble by, for example, forcing players to trade places or swap coins.

With all the time he spends rescuing princesses, racing karts and playing sports, it's nice that Mario still finds time to kick back and party, and nicer still that this year's edition is shaping up to be great fun. —CHRIS H.

Every few turns, Bowser gets to wreak havoc—with this star-stealing dark star, for example.

Someone has been watering these dandelions way too much.

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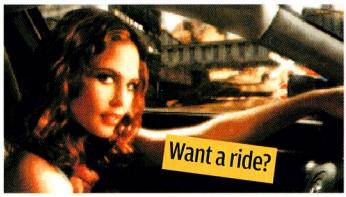
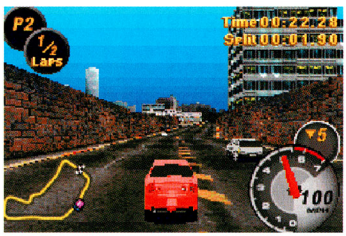
Speed Thrills

>NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

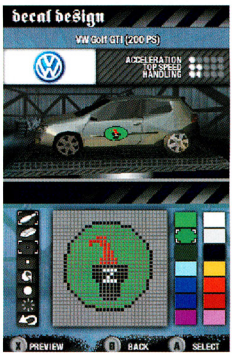
PLATFORM: DS/GBA • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

You say you want to be notorious, look hot and earn the respect of your fellow gearheads? Make your dreams come true by taking Need for Speed: Most Wanted for a spin on either Nintendo DS or Game Boy Advance this fall. The latest edition of EA's urban racer combines the intense police chases of Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit with the street racing and tuner culture of Need for Speed Underground and NFSU2. Although you might think that a conspicuously pimped ride would make it easier for the cops to haul you in, keep in mind that they have to catch you first, and the performance upgrades available in the Safehouse will give you an edge over those Crown Vic cruisers. As for looks, you'll be able to choose paint, rims and vinyl decals, and creative DS-version drivers will be able to draw their own custom decals on the touch screen. Of course, your street cred is just as important as your rap sheet, so you'll have to win lots of races to build respect. You'll do that in Career mode, competing in point-to-point, circuit and knockout-style races. Barricade challenges will pit you against the long arm of the law while boss races put you face-to-face with the best CPU drivers in the game. As if evading the cops and keeping your competition in the rearview mirror isn't enough of a challenge, you'll also have to weave through oncoming traffic. Each Career-mode chapter presents you with four races, including one against a boss driver. As the game's difficulty ramps up, you'll require ever faster, better-handling cars, which you can purchase in the Safehouse or build by upgrading the ride you already own. The stock vehicles include everything from a boxy VW Golf to a sleek and powerful Porsche Carrera GT. (I really, really want that car.) Two-player wireless LAN races are available on the DS, but you'll have to link up with cables to challenge a friend on your GBA. Both Most Wanted versions look and handle great compared to the majority of handheld racers, but the edge goes to the DS version for its smooth 3-D graphics, excellent sound, wireless multiplayer and exceptional overall performance. With Mario Kart DS also at the starting line, it's going to be a great season for handheld racing fans. —SCOTT P.

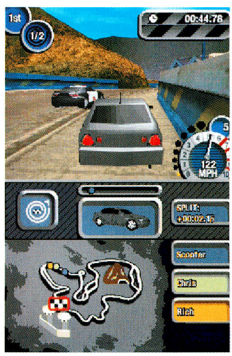




Blocky graphics aside, you've got to wonder how the driver of that orange van in the GBA screenshot below can see through the windshield. Visit a car wash, buddy!



Whether you're the next Picasso or just a scribbler who thinks a Zelda-inspired torch on the side of your Golf would look cool, the DS game's paint program lets you draw it your way.



The cops are out in force, but they seem less effective at apprehending speeders than in NFS: Hot Pursuit. Maybe they just don't care anymore.

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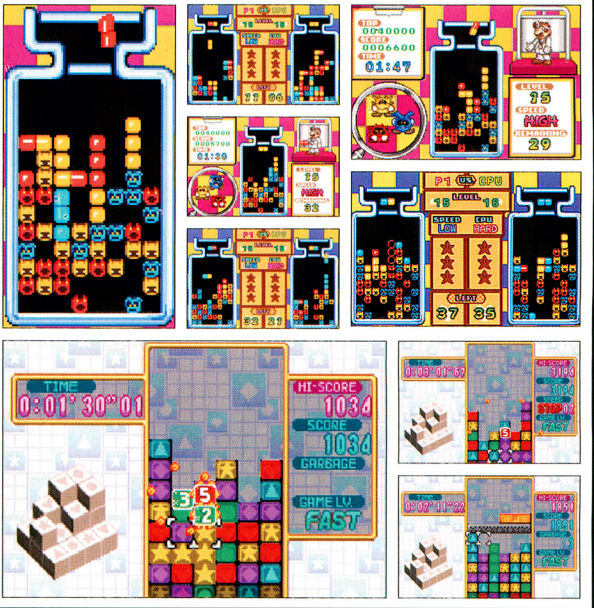
Double Dose

>DR. MARIO AND PUZZLE LEAGUE

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS • RELEASE: DEC. 2005

A great puzzle-action game will devour your soul. When not playing it, you'll think of nothing else. With Nintendo's two-in-one GBA pak, you'll have two obsessions to keep your mind racing. Dr. Mario, a game rivaling Tetris for puzzle-action infamy, will return to the GBA for a second stint, joined by a game that you might know better from the N64's Pokémon Puzzle League, or Pokémon Puzzle Challenge on the Game Boy Color. Stripped of its Pika-cuteness, the game boils down to an utterly addictive concept: By switching blocks only left and right, you'll strive to clear boards by lining up same-colored blocks, three or more, up or across, while the field inches upward. It's a real pressure cooker, especially when slabs plummet onto your pile without warning. Both games offer several single-player modes that change up the challenge, including Vs. CPU battles which, if you turn up the difficulty far enough, will either kill you or make you stronger. They're a very good way to muscle up your brain for the 2P matches also included in both games (you'll need the appropriate link cable). —STEVEN G.



What's for dinner: beef or pork?

How many times must we warn you? Never open the scary door.

War Cabinet

>THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES/GRYPTONITE GAMES
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

Escaping from the reality of World War II, four siblings discover a portal to a fantasy world in the game adaptation of Disney's *Chronicles of Narnia* film. Unlike the RPG-lite DS version, which we previewed last issue, the GCN version is straight-up combat action with up to two players guiding the Pevensie children through winter battles against Centaurs, Minotaurs, Wraiths, Ankleslicers and more C.S. Lewis creations. Featuring 20 minutes of live-action footage from the film and additional voice work by the actors, the game elaborates on the story's battles with each pair of characters collaborating to pull off unique combo attacks. The children also have their own specialities, such as Lucy's ability to use wolves to break through barriers. And in the big finale, the children enlist a whole army of creatures to take on the White Witch. The battle will allow you to use limited RTS-stlye commands, so prepare for a long and epic struggle. —GEORGE S.

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WAY OF THE GUN

Murderers walk the streets, lawless men wear badges and every sane man is armed to the teeth. Welcome to the wild world of Gun.

By Andy Myers

Nobody knew what to expect from Neversoft—a developer known mostly for its work on the Tony Hawk franchise—when it announced Gun at this year's E3. Neversoft hasn't worked on a nonskateboarding title since Spider-Man for the Sony PlayStation, and didn't reveal anything about the new game beyond its simplistic title. In June, however, the development team unveiled its intentions for Gun at a press event in San Francisco. Neversoft president Joel Jewett (handlebar mustache and all) emphatically described the title as a violent, free-roaming experience set in the Wild West, where "everyone carries a f*****n' gun!"

With roughly one month left before the game's launch, we paid a visit to Gun publisher Activision's headquarters in Santa Monica, CA, to garner some hands-on time with the highly anticipated GCN title and interview some of the key players behind the bonanza. Still wondering if Neversoft can pull off a sandbox-style Wild West shooter? We'll save you the suspense: the answer is yes.

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The West Retold

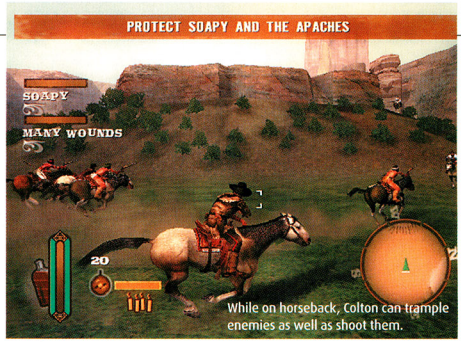
When movie screenwriter/history buff Randall Jahnson (*The Mask of Zorro*, *The Doors*) was preparing for his first meeting with the Neversoft team regarding their Wild West adventure game, he considered bringing his black-powder Civil War pistol to "whip out in the middle of the meeting and show these guys that I really know what I'm talking about." He talked himself out of it at the last minute for fear of being thought a lunatic. When Jahnson arrived at Neversoft headquarters for the meeting, though, he found Joel Jewett, Chad Finley and Scott Pease each holding vintage guns of their own.

Gun's characters span a wide range of occupations.

Gun's obsessed creators were not content with simply churning out a video game based on the Wild West—they wanted to tell a great story as well. Neversoft and Activision brought in Jahnson to pen the saga and recruited a talented voice cast to give life to the script. Actor Tom Jane (*The Punisher*, *Deep Blue Sea*) plays the part of Gun's main character, Colton White. Colton, like many others from his time period, is a cowboy fresh off the front lines of the Civil War. The game begins as Colton is reunited with his father, rugged mountain man Ned White (voiced by Kris Kristofferson). Ned guides Colton on a quick tour around the countryside (which serves as the game's tutorial) in which they hunt quail and deer, and even take down a pissed-off grizzly bear.

Shortly after the tour, Colton and Ned wind up on a steamboat on the upper Missouri River. When an Indian tribe and a corrupt, crazy preacher named Reid (played by Brad Dourif of *Deadwood*) attack the boat, looking for a secret treasure they believe to be in the hands of Colton's dad, Colton gets his first taste of hand-to-hand combat. Before the vessel bursts into flames, Ned reveals that he is (drumroll, please) not Colton's father. Ned White goes down with the ship, and Colton embarks on a quest for vengeance, and for answers regarding his own cloudy past.

After the steamboat incident, Gun opens up into a massive, free-roaming experience spanning the New Mexico countryside. Colton must acquire a horse and make his way to Dodge City (the first of multiple unlockable towns) in search of a prostitute named Jenny. The saga continues as Colton comes across new clues leading him to the much-larger town of Empire, New Mexico (loosely based on the real-life town of Las Vegas, New Mexico)—but it's up to the player to decide whether to advance Gun's story or to embark on one of many side missions. The game is all about doing whatever you want, whenever you want. "We've got a great story that we want [the player] to experience, but we also want [the player] to experience what it's like to be out in the West," explains project lead Chad Finley.



While on horseback, Colton can trample enemies as well as shoot them.

> **"I think that there is a lot of that spirit—that true, of authentic spirit of the West—instilled into the game."**
>
> **—Randall Jahnson, Gun Screenwriter**

To achieve this level of authenticity in Gun, Neversoft and Jahnson turned to a number of sources for inspiration. The acclaimed HBO series *Deadwood* is the most obvious, as it's level of violence, language and disturbing behavior gets a run for its money in Gun. "The whole dark vision of *Deadwood* was certainly a topic of conversation between all of us," Jahnson admits. He also cited other works: "We talked about movies like *Little Big Men* and *The Wild Bunch*, and all the films of Sam Peckinpah—these were all the great Westerns that I grew up on in the '70s."

But it wasn't just movies that inspired Gun—it was the West itself. The Gun team looked through piles of literature, studying the lives of historical figures such as Wyatt Earp, Arkansas Dave Rudabaugh and Liver-Eating Johnson—not just the way they've been depicted in movies, but their actual lifestyles—to imbue Gun with a sense of realism. "I think that there is a lot of that spirit—that true, authentic spirit of the West—instilled in the game," explains Jahnson.

Gun In-Hand

We recently got our hands on an early version of Gun, and the game's go-anywhere, shoot-anything atmosphere left quite an impression. Gun's world spans large chunks of Nevada and New Mexico circa 1880 and boasts no load time between areas. As Colton, you can travel through the many environments on horseback or on foot. And unlike in many a Western film, the main character has no allegiance

In addition to gunplay, Colton can engage in melee combat and use enemies as human shields.

Molotov cocktail courtesy of Colton White.

to a particular horse (like the Lone Ranger's Silver, or Roy Roger's Trigger)—Colton can take or leave horses as he pleases. Jumping on and off a horse is seamless, and in the version we played, the riding mechanics were spot-on.

Whether on horse or on foot, Colton can engage in some serious gunplay. But guns aren't his only weapons; he'll use bows and arrows, dynamite, molotov cocktails, dynamite strapped to arrows—Gun is all about carnage. Still, your standard pistol (or pistols, when you learn to dual-wield) is your best weapon. In Quickdraw mode, which switches the action midbattle from third-person to a first-person, slow-motion mode, you can quickly switch from one target to the next with a flick of the Control Stick. The effect can last only as long as Colton's Quickdraw meter allows, but the more accurate your shots, the longer the meter will stay full. So a skilled gunslinger can walk into a saloon, start a fight, enter Quickdraw mode and shoot the guns out of his enemies' hands before they even fire a shot.

Quickdraw is just one of Colton's many skills that you can improve throughout the game using an RPG-like experience-earning system. As you gain experience, you can bolster Colton's skills in Quickdraw, melee attacks, horseback riding, overall health and more, allowing you to further personalize your game experience. You can earn extra experience in many ways, one of which is by scalping your enemies. There is a small window of opportunity for scalping—you must do it after an opponent is shot down, but before he actually dies.

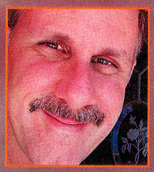
Gun's overall presentation looks very promising, as well. Whether you're enjoying an exquisite sunset on the open range or admiring how realistically the blood of your fallen enemy splatters on a nearby tree, you'll be pleased with the graphics and environments. And the 75 fully motion-captured cut-scenes and well-acted voice-overs don't hurt, either. As Gun's screenwriter puts it: "So much has gotten across in the nuances of the animation, and the body language of the characters, and the vocal delivery that the actors provided—so much is accomplished that way; much more than I expected."

So Much to Do, So Much Time

Gun's Wild West vibe is amplified by the wide-open environment. The story is always looming over your head, but your hand is never forced. Colton can keep busy on the open plains by fighting bandits, mining gold for extra cash, hunting a variety of animals, hopping from horse to horse—and that's just the action outside of the cities. Once inside Dodge City or Empire, you can do just about anything you would expect in the West. In a saloon, for instance, you can stop by the card table for a friendly (or unfriendly) game of poker. You have the option to cheat at the card table—but the further you advance in the game, the more likely your opponents are to find you out.

Bounty missions are also available from within towns. If you spot a Wanted poster, you can take on the mission and hunt down the criminal for money and experience. Other side missions include joining the Pony Express to deliver mail, or embracing the law and getting deputized.

Straight from the Horse's Mouth



Hollywood screenwriter Randall Jahnson relied on his love of American West history when writing the script for Gun. He talked to us about the real-life hoodlums that influenced three of Gun's key characters.

Hoodoo Brown

"Hoodoo Brown was, in real life, the honorary mayor, and coroner, and justice of the peace of Las Vegas. And he was a real shady character. As a matter of fact, his ultimate demise is unknown. He skipped town with some money and a very attractive prostitute, and was never heard from again."

Arkansas Dave Rudabaugh

"Arkansas Dave Rudabaugh played both sides of the law. He ultimately ended up dying in a gunfight in a little town in Mexico, in a cantina down there where he had mouthed off. There was some gunplay that went down, and he shot a number of locals, then a mob ended up ganging up on him and shooting him down. They cut off his head, and put it on a post at the edge of town—that was his very unceremonious end."

Thomas Magruder

"Magruder is roughly based on a guy named Thomas Catron who was the leader of the Santa Fe Ring. He, ironically, became the first US senator of New Mexico, and at one point, after the Colfax County War, had accumulated more land than anyone in the United States."

Home on the Range

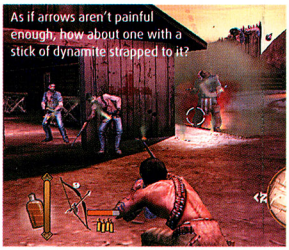
Gun marks a new era for one of the most prolific development teams in the business—it's one of two stellar titles Neversoft has lined up for this holiday season (see our Tony Hawk's American Wasteland review in this issue). Neversoft seems right at home in the West. Maybe it helps that Joel Jewett grew up in Montana, and certainly Randall Jahnson's obsession with American West history helped with the level of detail. "I hope that everyone who plays [Gun] will be inspired," says Jahnson, "or have their curiosity piqued, so that they'll want to go out and maybe check into the real-life story of some of these characters, or investigate exactly what the real-life West was like." If there was ever a doubt about Neversoft's ability to break away from its signature franchise, Gun lays it to rest.

"Gun and American Wasteland are by far the biggest and most complex titles we have ever worked on."

—Joel Jewett, Neversoft President

We have yet to play Gun's full version. But we are nonetheless excited for the title, and for its possibilities. Neversoft has hinted at the idea of Gun being the beginning of a franchise. From what we've seen, though, it looks to be a tough act to follow.

Gun's Quickdraw mode allows Colton to take out multiple enemies in a jiffy.

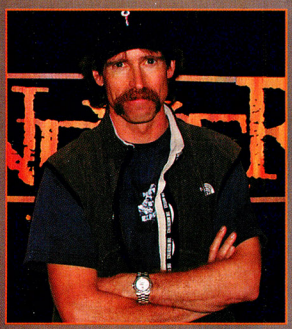


As if arrows aren't painful enough, how about one with a stick of dynamite strapped to it?

Interview with Neversoft President **Joel Jewett**

NP: Neversoft has worked primarily on Hawk for so long now. What was it like for the Gun team to change gears?

JJ: Changing gears has been a blast, but we did more than that. A number of guys from the Hawk team assumed more responsibility for that franchise, while we moved some of our senior people onto the Gun project. It has been a lot of hard work, but just think about it . . . by the time Gun and Tony Hawk's American Wasteland ship, in just two years we will have doubled the size of Neversoft, squared off into two solid teams and, including THUG2, we will have shipped three AAA titles . . . the guys that work here never cease to amaze me, and I am proud to be able to make games with them. I think that both of our franchises have a ton of future potential, especially with a new generation of platforms right around the corner . . . it's pretty much an exciting time to be making games.



NP: When was the idea for Gun conceived? Is there any relation to the canceled Big Guns project?

JJ: Big Guns . . . now where did you hear about that one? I always liked that title (the project was a mech-shooter) but it sort of got laid to rest back about 10 years ago . . . the idea for Gun came up when we were trying to figure out what we should do next that had not been done . . . when we started talking about doing a Western, and then started to do a bit of research into where we could take the concept, we started to get really excited. . . we started to think about it while we were making THUG, damn near three years ago. . . .

NP: The Wild West seems like the perfect setting for a mature, sandbox-style game. Why hasn't anyone made this game before?

JJ: That is exactly what we thought . . . perfect setting; why hasn't anyone done it? I think part of it is that people are very often worried about trying something new and different (which is exactly why we wanted to do it). Another reason is that it is not an easy game to make . . . I think that is always another good reason to try to do a game . . . keeps the competition on their toes.

NP: As a "go anywhere, do anything" game, how does Gun compare in scope to American Wasteland, or other sandbox titles?

JJ: Gun and American Wasteland are by far the biggest and most complex titles we have ever worked on. I think that Gun is one of the best marriages of story to "go anywhere, do anything" that I have seen.

NP: With so much success for the Hawk franchise, do you see Gun as a one-time affair or something bigger?

JJ: That is the beauty of the period of time between 1860 and 1890 that people call the American West . . . more amazing events and compelling stories of individual hardship and triumph took place during that time than we can do justice to in a career of gamemaking . . . but what the hell—we might as well give it a shot.

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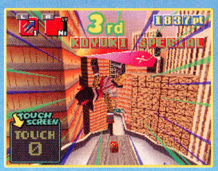

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ON THE WAR PATH

The twists and turns of Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance make it easy to lose focus—our nine-page miniguide will keep you on the straight and narrow.

By Andy Myers

IN WITH THE NEW

Though Fire Emblem battle mechanics remain familiar from one game to the next, each title has its own quirks. As the first Fire Emblem game on the GCN and in 3-D, Path of Radiance brings a variety of features that set it apart from its predecessors—we've highlighted five of them.

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

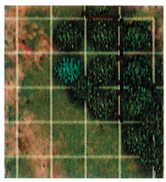
In Path of Radiance, units can learn special skills that will give them advantages on the battlefield. Learnable skills range in effectiveness, from regenerating your unit's health to damaging an opponent when it attacks your unit. You can find many different skills throughout the game in the form of scrolls (though some scrolls are inherent to specific characters). Each unit can learn a limited number of skills, and many skills are compatible only with specific characters and classes. You can assign and remove skills at will, but do so carefully—when you remove a skill from a character, you're discarding it permanently.

WEAPON CONTROL

Once you reach POR's eighth chapter, you'll have a number of new options between battles, one of which is to visit your party's blacksmith. For a price, the blacksmith will create a variety of custom weapons for your units. You can adjust many attributes of a weapon, but decide carefully which weapon to build and how powerful to make it—you can create only one new weapon per chapter.

NATURE HEALS

Keep an eye out for sparkling green bushes (known as Healhedges) on the battlefield—they have regenerative powers. If you park a wounded unit on a Healhedge, he'll regain a small amount of HP each turn, leaving your healers to tend to other injured allies.



SHOVE YOUR FRIENDS

Shoving is a new battlefield technique that allows certain units to push an ally one space over. The maneuver can come in handy in a number of situations, whether you need to push a unit out of harm's way or clear a path for another unit to attack. Only nonmounted units can perform a shove, and the Weight of both the shover and the shovee will determine whether it can occur. If the Smite skill is assigned to the shover, he will shove an ally two spaces rather than one.

EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

With 46 playable characters, you'll have to choose carefully which ones to take into battle. To give you further control of the growth of your individual units, Path of Radiance rewards bonus experience points after each battle, and you can divvy them up among the units of your choosing. Use these points to level up units that are falling behind due to lack of battle exposure, or to strengthen your most-used units even more.

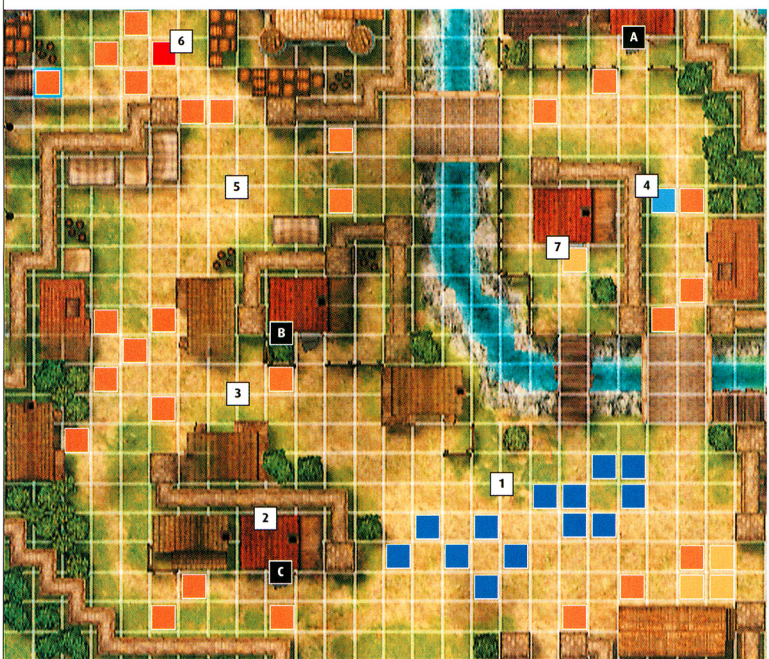
THERE'S MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM!

You'll always miss something in a game the size of Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance—unless you have the official Nintendo Power player's guide, of course.

visit www.nintendopower.com/guides/fe

FIRE STARTER

Battle in Path of Radiance is nuanced, and you must play your cards right to keep all your party members alive. In the following two pages we'll walk you through Chapter 11, Blood Runs Red, to illustrate a successful battle plan.



MAP KEY

- Starting Ally
- Recruitable Character
- Starting Enemy
- Enemy Reinforcement
- Boss
- A Killer Lance
- B Elwind
- C Dracoshield

1 IN THE BEGINNING

Formulating a plan based on your environment and enemies is essential in any battle. Check the View Map option in the prebattle menu to size up the opposing force—pressing the Y Button over individual enemies will reveal their stats and inventories. Once you know what you're up against, bring in the appropriate party members and begin the battle. For Chapter 11, you may want to split your party up at the start of the battle, sending a small group (including Lethe or Mordecai) to the northeast to recruit Zihark while the rest of your group heads west.

2 MOVE IT OR LOSE IT!

If your group does not make haste at the start of some battles, a Thief will sneak onto the scene and steal the loot from nearby houses and treasure chests. To keep from missing out on valuable items, send a unit with a high Movement stat to secure the treasure or block it from enemy hands.

3 YOU SHALL NOT PASS!

Certain environmental bottlenecks can work in your favor. Narrow pathways provide a great opportunity to create roadblocks and draw your enemies toward you. Keep more-resilient units (such as Paladins and Fighters) on the front line while positioning Archers and magic-wielders in back. Make sure your units stay close together, and have a healer nearby.

4 BETRAYAL FOR THE GREATER GOOD

Some enemies can be convinced to switch sides and join your party. In Port Toha, you can recruit Zihark (a Laguz supporter disguised as a vigilante), but only by having Lethe or Mordecai speak to him. Position one of the beasts next to Zihark on the battlefield, and select Talk. (See page 60 for a more-detailed description of recruitment).

5 TAKING A BREATHER

A boss and his lackeys will usually put up the toughest fight on any given map. When possible, reunite your separated units for some downtime before a boss battle, preferably in a location just out of the boss's range. This will give you a chance to trade weapons and items, heal injured characters and strategize for the final assault.

6 THE BIG KAHUNA

Most bosses are just like regular enemies, but stronger. Press the Y Button over a boss to view his weapons, and attack him with a strong unit capable of damaging him. Mackoya, the boss of Chapter 11, is capable of attacking from both short and long range. Attack him with a powerful lance-wielding enemy, and keep your Laguz units away—his Laguzslayer is nasty against Beasts.

7 AN UNINVITED GUEST

Partway through Chapter 11 the Black Knight will appear, but he will not attack unless provoked. You cannot defeat the Black Knight—stay out of his attack range, and reach the northwest corner as quickly as possible to clear the map.

CLASS WAR

Each of the game's 35 character classes has its own strengths and weaknesses. Most classes belong to the Beorc (or human) race, though a handful of classes are of the Laguz (or demihuman) race. Laguz are new to the Fire Emblem world—they will earn experience like any other character, but their class will not change. Most other classes have a beginning class and a master class; the class change is indicated by an arrow on the following pages.

A TIME FOR CHANGE

Once a character of a beginning class reaches level 21, he will automatically change to the appropriate master class (the character in the screenshot below, for instance, will change to a level-1 Falcon Knight). A rare item known as a Master Seal can prematurely change a character's class at level 10 rather than 21. Master Seals are handy for upgrading low-level characters that join you late in the game.

CLASS CUSTOMIZATION

Though you cannot decide which class your character will transform into, you can often choose a new weapon for a character to wield after the class change. An Axe Knight, for instance, can expand his horizons and learn one of three additional weapon types. Once a unit learns to wield a new weapon type, he'll need to use it often on the battlefield to increase that particular unit's weapon level.

RANGER → LORD

The main character of Path of Radiance and the eventual leader of your party, **Ike** is the only Ranger/Lord in the game. He is also the most well-rounded character, powerful enough to do some serious damage with a sword and resilient enough to withstand most enemy attacks. Ike's class change to Lord will occur automatically in Chapter 18.

PRIEST → BISHOP

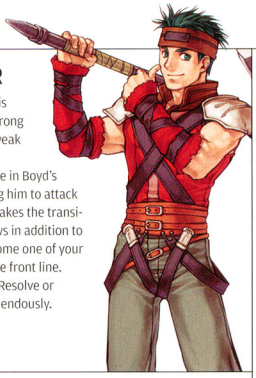
Rhys, a vital member to your party, will join the mercenaries in Chapter 2. He is the only Priest/Bishop in the game, and will serve as your group's primary healer. Though an important character, Rhys is vulnerable to most attacks, and must be protected at all times. While moving across a map, keep him behind your strong characters and out of enemy range. Rhys's usefulness will increase throughout the game, especially after he learns to use a Physic Staff (which can heal allies from a distance) and offensive Light magic (which he'll learn after his class change). Assign the skills Guard, Shade or Renewal to Rhys—they will aid him well and help offset his weaknesses.

CLERIC → VALKYRIE

Mist is another character who doesn't share a class with other units. She'll join your party as a low-level Cleric with only the ability to use staffs. If Mist earns enough experience to become a Valkyrie, she'll become a mounted unit with an additional ability: swordplay. Leveling up Mist may seem tedious, but it will prove worth the trouble near the end of the game when you face off with the Black Knight.

FIGHTER → WARRIOR

Boyd is your group's only Fighter, and is with your party from Chapter 1. He's strong with an axe and has high HP, but he's weak to magic attacks—keep him away from enemy Sages and Priests. The Hand Axe in Boyd's arsenal will be useful early on, allowing him to attack his enemies from a distance. If Boyd makes the transition to Warrior, he will learn to use bows in addition to axes. As a Warrior, Boyd will likely become one of your most resilient units, unstoppable on the front line. Teaching Boyd skills such as Colossus, Resolve or Smite will increase his usefulness tremendously.



BERSERKER

Largo, your party's sole Berserker, will join your group right before Chapter 25, but only if Calill the Sage is in your party. Having similar strengths and weaknesses to a Warrior, Largo should steer clear of strong magic-wielders and focus on hand-to-hand combat. He's brutal with an axe, making him a powerhouse against most lance-wielding enemies.

ARCHER → SNIPER

In Chapter 8, seasoned Sniper **Shinon** will leave your party (though you can lure him back in Chapter 18); in Chapter 9, **Rolf**, an inexperienced Archer, will join your ranks. Snipers and Archers are masters of the bow and can deal damage from a distance. Neither class fares well against direct attacks—keep them off the front line, and equip them with the Longbow to attack from even farther away. Assigning Deadeye to a Sniper makes him even deadlier.

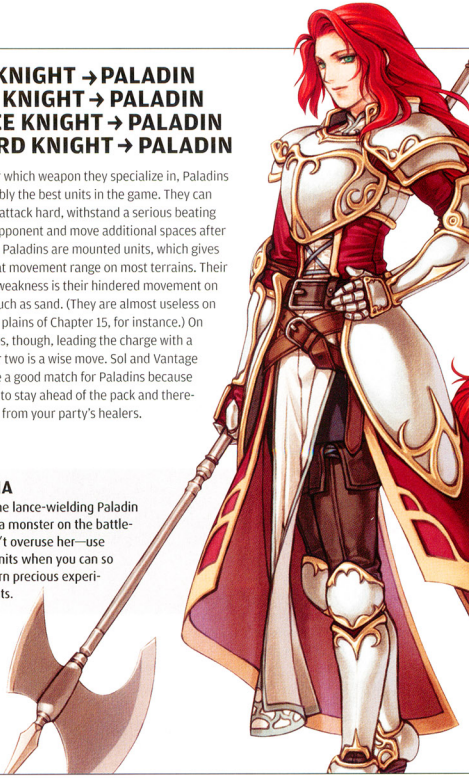
MAGE → SAGE

A number of Mages and Sages will join your party, each specializing in a certain magic type. Mages are very weak, so they require much protection—you'll often need to have stronger units rescue them to keep them alive. Once they make the transition to Sage, though, their offensive magic power will be so great that they can take down large Warriors and Berserkers with ease. When up against other magic users, Mages and Sages usually don't perform well. Instead, have them launch ranged attacks against enemies that are incapable of counterattacking.

SOREN
Early on, Soren the Mage will be a burden because of the hand-holding he demands. Soren the Sage, however, is a nasty opponent.

AXE KNIGHT → PALADIN
BOW KNIGHT → PALADIN
LANCE KNIGHT → PALADIN
SWORD KNIGHT → PALADIN

No matter which weapon they specialize in, Paladins are probably the best units in the game. They can move far, attack hard, withstand a serious beating from an opponent and move additional spaces after attacking. Paladins are mounted units, which gives them great movement range on most terrains. Their only real weakness is their hindered movement on terrains such as sand. (They are almost useless on the sandy plains of Chapter 15, for instance.) On most maps, though, leading the charge with a Paladin or two is a wise move. Sol and Vantage scrolls are a good match for Paladins because they tend to stay ahead of the pack and therefore away from your party's healers.



TITANIA
Though the lance-wielding Paladin Titania is a monster on the battlefield, don't overuse her—use weaker units when you can so they'll earn precious experience points.

BEAST TRIBE

Hailing from Gallia, members of the Beast Tribe (consisting of cats, lions and tigers) are vicious animals on the battlefield. Like other Laguz, Beasts don't change classes—once a Beast, always a Beast. Laguz Beasts must build up their Transform Gauge in battle before they can change from human to animal form and attack. (To speed up the transformation process, use a Laguz Stone on the battlefield.) When in their humanlike state, members of the Beast Tribe are nearly useless, but in animal form they unleash a furious Claw attack on an enemy, and their quickness allows them to dodge many incoming attacks. Beasts are particularly weak to Fire—keep them away from fire-wielding Mages and Sages.

MORDECAI
Mordecai is one tough kitty. In animal form, he'll tear through an opponent like nobody's business.

Recruiting Tactics

Though some characters will join your group automatically, many will join only if you have the proper unit speak to them on the battlefield. Usually there is a window of opportunity for recruiting a unit, and if you miss your opportunity the unit will disappear. On the Choose Units menu before battle, scroll right to the Conversation column—a recruitable unit's name will show up in the Conversation row for the unit that must speak to the potential recruit. When recruiting an enemy unit (rather than a neutral one), you'll usually have to sneak up—the unit may attack the approaching unit and die from your unit's automatic counterattack.

ILYANA

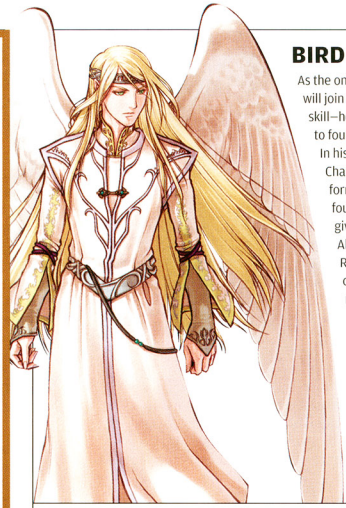
Ilyana is among your enemies in Chapter 8. As she approaches, stay out of range or she will attack and most likely die. Wait for the right moment, and move in Ike to talk to her.

ASTRID AND GATRIE

Some characters can be recruited only by other recruitable units. In Chapter 13, have Ike speak with Astrid the Bow Knight. (Astrid is a neutral unit who will die if she isn't recruited quickly.) Once Astrid joins your party, have her talk to your former ally, Gatrie—he'll gladly rejoin the mercenaries, but only at her order.

STEFAN

Stefan is the trickiest character in the game to recruit—but missing out on the powerful Swordmaster would be a shame. In Chapter 15, have Lethe or Mordecai stand two squares west and one square down from the map's northeast corner and wait. Stefan will appear out of nowhere. If a unit other than Lethe or Mordecai tries to lure Stefan out of hiding, he will flee, never to return.



BIRD TRIBE: HERON

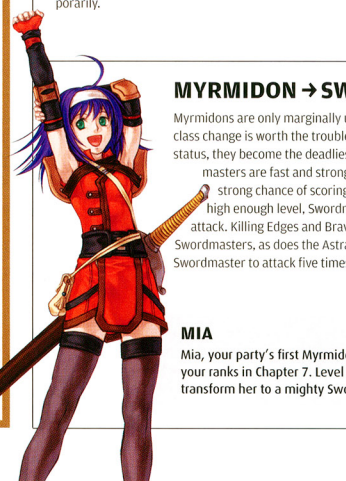
As the only member of the Heron Tribe that will join your party, Reyson has a unique skill—he can perform a Chant, enabling up to four units to move twice in one turn. In his humanlike state, Reyson can Chant for just one unit. In his animal form, however, he can enable up to four units to take additional turns, giving your party a huge advantage. Also, any unit standing adjacent to Reyson will gain health at the start of each player phase. Reyson cannot attack, nor can he defend himself—you must protect him at all costs. Late in the game, equip Reyson with the rare Knight Band, which will allow him to move additional spaces and escape from harm's way after doing his duty.

BIRD TRIBE: HAWK

Two members of the Hawk Tribe, **Janaff** and **Ulki**, will join your party in Chapter 18. Like other Laguz, Hawks cannot attack in their humanlike state—they must fill their Transform Gauge and change to animals first. Hawks are great allies on the battlefield—they are vulnerable to arrows and Wind magic, but they have the strength of other Laguz and the movement range of Pegasus Knights. Use your Hawks to fly ahead of your party to access hard-to-reach places and take out long-range attackers.

DRAGON TRIBE

The Dragon Laguz of Goldoa is a rare breed. Dragons are heavy hitters on the battlefield, and can sustain a lot of enemy damage. **Nasir** and **Ena** are the only Dragons that will join your party, and neither will do so until late in the game. Ena breathes fire on opponents, while Nasir breathes ice. Dragons are slow creatures—keep them near the front line when possible, but don't be afraid to leave them behind temporarily.



MYRMIDON → SWORDMASTER

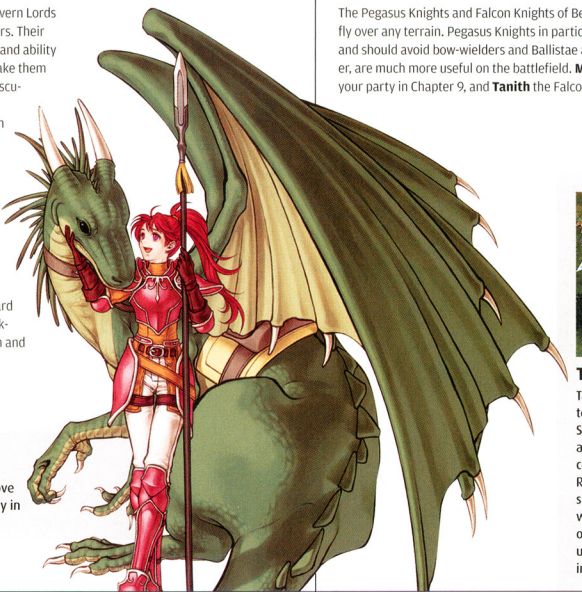
Myrmidons are only marginally useful, but leveling them up for a class change is worth the trouble. Once they reach Swordmaster status, they become the deadliest class in the game. Swordmasters are fast and strong on the front line, and they have a strong chance of scoring a critical blow. Once they reach a high enough level, Swordmasters can dodge just about any attack. Killing Edges and Brave Swords work well in the hands of Swordmasters, as does the Astra skill—it will enable a Swordmaster to attack five times consecutively.

MIA

Mia, your party's first Myrmidon, will join your ranks in Chapter 7. Level her up to transform her to a mighty Swordmaster.

WYVERN RIDER → WYVERN LORD

Wyvern Riders and Wyvern Lords are flying lance-wielders. Their high movement range and ability to cross any terrain make them ideal candidates for rescuing endangered party members. Wyverns can attack with ranged weapons (such as the Javelin) to stay at a safe distance from their opponents. They are particularly vulnerable to arrows and most types of magic. Equipping a Wyvern with a Full Guard will help offset its weaknesses, as will the Stun and Parity skills.



JILL

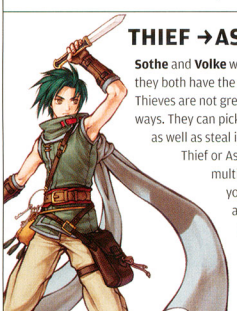
Jill, your party's first Wyvern Rider, will prove to be a fairly hardy ally in the air.

PEGASUS KNIGHT → FALCON KNIGHT

The Pegasus Knights and Falcon Knights of Begnion are mounted units that can fly over any terrain. Pegasus Knights in particular are very susceptible to arrows, and should avoid bow-wielders and Ballistae at all costs. Falcon Knights, however, are much more useful on the battlefield. **Marcia** the Pegasus Knight will join your party in Chapter 9, and **Tanith** the Falcon Knight will join in Chapter 18.

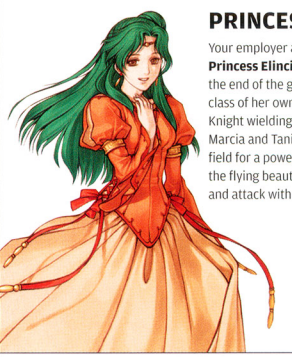
TANITH

Tanith is a powerful ally. Her ability to use magic swords (such as the Sonic Sword) makes her effective against other flying units. She comes to your party with the Reinforce skill, which allows her to summon flying reinforcements, to whom Ike can issue general orders on the battlefield. These disposable units make great decoys for drawing enemy fire on any map.



THIEF → ASSASSIN

Sothe and **Volke** will join your party as Thieves, and they both have the potential to become Assassins. Thieves are not great in combat, but are skilled in other ways. They can pick locked doors and treasure chests, as well as steal items from enemies. Always include a Thief or Assassin in your ranks on levels with multiple chests and doors—this will save you the trouble of having to find keys, and help you avoid missing out on rare items.



PRINCESS CRIMEA

Your employer and travel companion **Princess Elincia** will join your party toward the end of the game. Though she occupies a class of her own, she is essentially a Pegasus Knight wielding a special sword. Elincia, Marcia and Tanith can team up on the battlefield for a powerful Triangle Attack—position the flying beauties on three sides of an enemy and attack with the third to trigger it.

SOLDIER → HALBERDIER

Soldiers and Halberdiers don't have any special skills, but their ability to withstand attacks coupled with their decent movement range makes them useful as support fighters. Use them near the front line to prey on already-injured enemies while your powerhouses attack full-health enemies. The Luna and Guard scrolls will be useful for Soldiers and Halberdiers.

NEPHENEE

Nephenee the Soldier will join your party after you rescue her from a Daein prison in Chapter 10.

KNIGHT → GENERAL

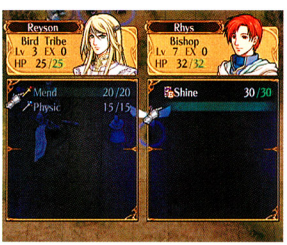
Knights and Generals are the tanks of your party. They move slowly on all terrains, but can sustain great amounts of damage, making them useful for blocking passageways while bow-wielders and magic-users attack enemies from behind. Though they aren't the most proficient attackers, Knights and Generals can utilize ranged weapons for better counterattacking abilities. When you find Speedwings, use them on your Knights and Generals to increase their pathetic movement range.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Eventually your party will be so large that you won't be able to take every character into battle—you'll need to pick and choose which characters will gain experience and become your core group. Each map has its own challenges, though, and you'll want to be prepared for whatever the game throws your way. A good party has strong attackers and defenders for the front line, skilled healers and long-range attackers for the rear, and flying units for rescuing injured allies. Some maps require the expertise of a Thief or an Assassin, while others have rough terrain that makes it impossible for mounted units to move. A little teamwork will serve as the glue to bring all the classes together to earn victories on the battlefield.

CAN YOU PLEASE HOLD THIS?

Updating your characters' inventories between battles is one of the hardest things to get right—you'll always wish you'd brought something that you left at the convoy. Fill up most of your units' weapon slots, and keep an eye on the lifespan of the weapons. Since Laguz cannot wield conventional weapons, they should always have three open weapon slots when entering a battle. Use the extra space to load them up with weapons and staffs that other units might need—its easy enough to trade on the battlefield.



SERENITY ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Reyson's unique ability to enable an ally (or allies) to move twice in one turn will be tempting to use solely for the purpose of attacking. More often than not, though, his ability will be of equal or greater benefit to a healer, who will be more able to keep your party's frontline units in good health.

MOVING UNITS

Flying units are great transportation, whether they're moving a capable unit into an attack zone or rescuing an injured unit from danger. The drawback is that both the moved unit and the carrier can lose a turn. To avoid this and save valuable time, have another unit take the rescued unit from the flier then drop the unit in an adjacent square.

SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE

Bow- and magic-wielders are not frontline units, but their ability to fight from a distance makes them great candidates for the second line. Let the frontline units protect them while they rain deadly arrows and magic on your foes.

Expert Opinions

With so many characters and classes to choose from, no Path of Radiance party turns out the same. We asked Rich Amtower, Alan Averill, Tim O'Leary and Thomas Connery (the localization crew that wrote the dialogue for the English version of the game) which four characters were their favorites by the time they reached the game's final chapter, and why.

RICH'S FAVORITES

"I like Soren because I like magic. It's as simple as that. Plus, he comes with Adept straight out the box, and those two attacks come in real handy. Ayup."

SOREN GATRIE VOLKE SHINON

ALAN'S FAVORITES

"Kieran is a complete nut job, and I think that's why I use him. His skill with an axe is quite handy, and his support conversations with Rhys are my personal favorites. He can also support Marcia, which worked well for my group."

KIERAN JILL MARCIA ROLF

TIM'S FAVORITES

"Janaff's a giant bird! What more do you need? He's fast, strong, and an all-around good egg. Plus, he's over 100 years old, can see for miles, and knows nothing about Beorc, which leads to much funny goodness."

JANAFF ZIHARK ILYANA MIST

TOM'S FAVORITES

"Boyd lacks the flair of knights, but his direct and indirect axe attacks more than make up for it, especially when I needed someone to cover Ike during the game's early stages."

BOYD MIA LETHE OSCAR

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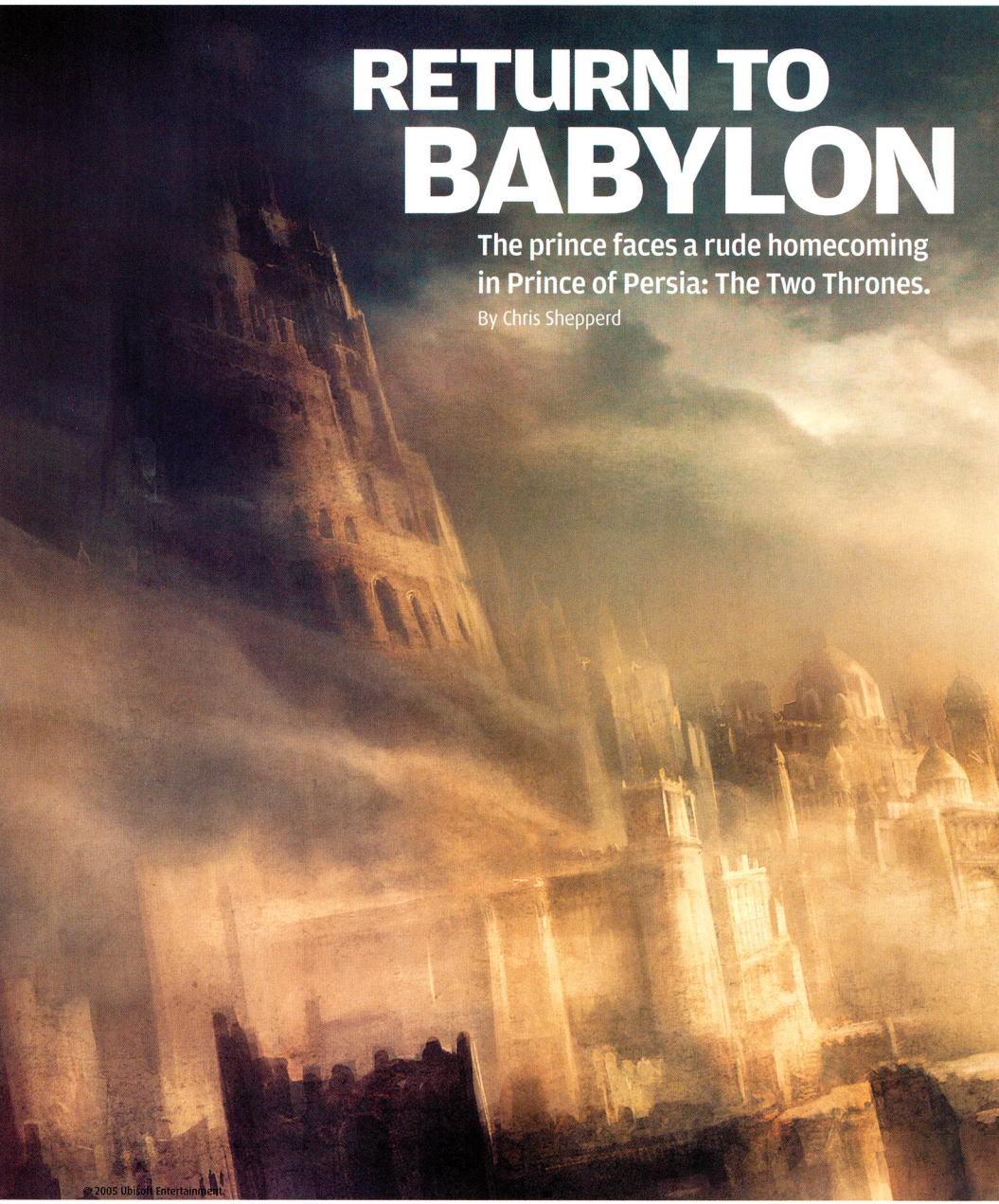

RETURN TO BABYLON

The prince faces a rude homecoming in Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones.

By Chris Shepperd

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The Prince of Persia has returned from the Island of Time, victorious over the Dahaka, the embodiment of fate itself. But in doing so, he's changed the shape of history, and as the prince returns to Babylon, the city is not as he left it. A powerful, mysterious army has ransacked the city, ousting the prince's father and laying waste to the kingdom.

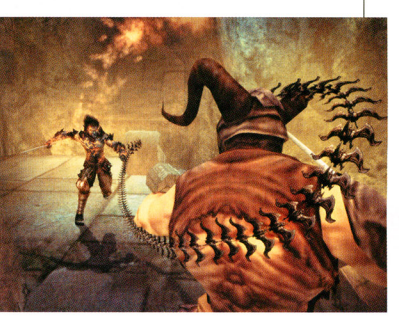
Now the prince and his former enemy Kaileena begin their newest adventure—to find the king and return peace to Babylon.

Hunt or Be Hunted

The army that invaded Babylon knows of the prince's return, and has sent word to every corner of the city. Even on its best days, Babylon is no safe haven. Class struggles have left the street-level citizens poor and their dwellings run-down. Above the alleys, though, the rich have created opulent palaces. Now, with Babylon under siege, the prince must navigate the city's corridors even more warily than in previous games. He must choose when to fight, when to move silently, and when to flee. He will need to be cunning, perceptive and acrobatic. Fortunately, the prince knows the streets and alleys of his hometown like the back of his hand.

But despite all the protection the prince can offer, he isn't able to keep Kaileena alive after she falls into the clutches of the invading army. But few could expect that her demise would lead to such an awful chain of events. When Kaileena is killed, the Sands of Time are unleashed, affecting man and animal alike—even the prince. Rescued from certain death and barely clinging to his life, the prince flees the scene of Kaileena's execution.

The prince could not have predicted the horrors that have beset Babylon. No one escaped the Sands of Time's curse; the degree to which each creature has mutated reflects its level of exposure to the awful power of the sands. For example, what used to be a lowly mutt skulking around the back alleys of Babylon has been transformed into a giant, fierce beast with unmatched speed and wily elusiveness. In addition to having



amazing strength, creatures affected by the Sands of Time are sometimes impervious to brute force. To conquer a foe, the prince must often find and exploit its vulnerability.

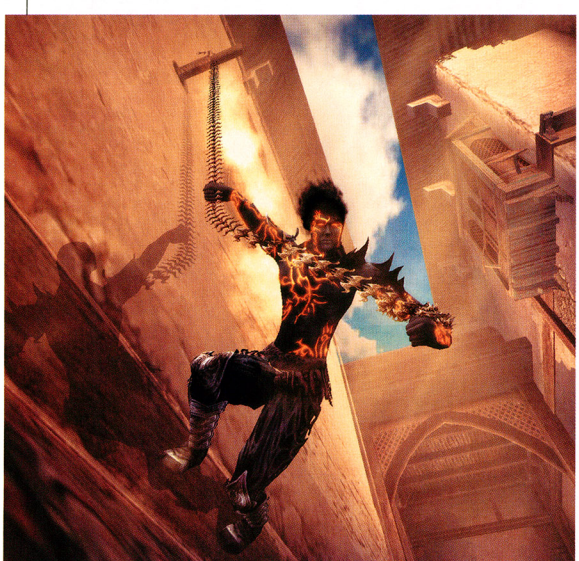
Able to move quickly and stealthily among the shadows of the city, he can often get the drop on an unsuspecting enemy. Using the Speed Kill system, the prince can attack and defeat an enemy in one well-timed blow, which makes him ready for combat under any situation.

In his third journey, the prince maintains his myriad fighting techniques and his time-shifting powers (which allow him to correct his mistakes and move swiftly against large groups of enemies), and he will learn new moves as he penetrates deeper into the city.

Back in Black

The Sands of Time course through the prince's body and occasionally overwhelm him, unleashing his evil alter ego, the Dark Prince. Guided by evil convictions, The Dark Prince has a different but parallel goal as the Prince of Persia—to reach the Royal Palace and assume the throne as king.

The true prince and the Dark Prince share many traits, including their prowess in combat. Both are capable of striking quickly and silently via the Speed Kill system, as well as chaining together lengthy move combos. However, the Dark Prince's unique weapon, the Daggertail, allows him to engage enemies

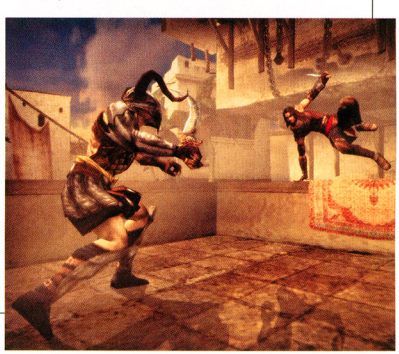


in completely new ways and to perform death-defying acrobatic maneuvers the true prince could only dream of.

The healing power of water rescues the true prince from being completely overtaken by the Dark Prince's control—when the Dark Prince wades into a pool, he'll be transformed into the regular prince once more.

In the Distance

Through it all, the Babylon Tower is in view—an ominous edifice that silently compels the prince nearer and nearer. He knows that his fate lies somewhere inside. To save himself and his city, he must answer the tower's call, and face whatever dangers await him within. The prince will embark on his third adventure later this year.



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INSIDE ZELDA

NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 7)

AN HONEST PERSPECTIVE ON HYRULE

TAKUMI KAWAGOE | NINTENDO | KYOTO

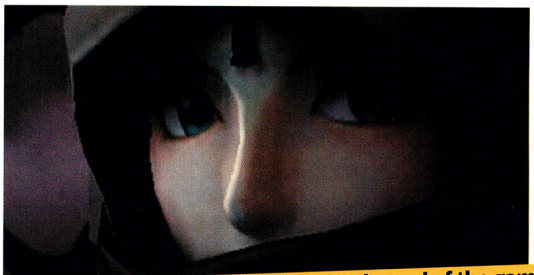
Takumi Kawagoe has a firm answer to one of the most hotly debated topics in video games: Did that stunningly beautiful game-preview trailer you just saw reflect the actual game? When Kawagoe has anything to say about it—and, as Nintendo's main man behind preview trailers, he usually does—what you see is what you'll be playing. Which is fantastic news for Zelda fans who've replayed his E3 game trailer 500 times, searching for clues about the Nintendo GameCube title. While many Twilight Princess details remain shrouded in secrecy, the trailer offers a perspective on the brutal action and dark side of Link's upcoming quest. And Kawagoe knows a thing or two about perspective—which you'll find out as he reveals how he's changed the way you look at gaming. And how he's gone over to the dark side himself on occasion.

Aside from what you see in the Twilight Princess trailer, how does it make you feel? Light, dark, movement, mood—Kawagoe keeps it all in mind with his game-centric philosophy of design.

The Truth in Trailers

Take a look at that E3 Twilight Princess trailer one more time. Notice the extreme differences between the trailer images that show lively village life and the dead hopelessness of the Twilight Realm? I focused my full attention on making that difference as sharp as I could. Because that's the nature of the game that you'll be playing. And notice that we dwelled—at just the perfect moment—on the gloomy image of Princess Zelda? Her dark melancholy is just as essential to the game experience. Personally, I hope that Zelda will liven up and regain her cheer by the end of the game, but I suspect that it may not be in Hyrule's destiny this time around. Though I can't expose any more truths beyond what I brought to light (and dark) in the trailer, I can say that we've been adding more rich expressiveness to Link's face than what you saw during E3. Because there's a *lot* to react to in Twilight Princess—and I'll have to stop myself right there.

Instead, let me talk about the way I create trailers and cut-scenes for Nintendo. I've got a strong philosophy that's rooted in *not* discarding the gameplay footage, as so many trailers and cut-scenes do. Above all, I refuse to eliminate the feeling that a player is controlling the action. This way, the viewer will be drawn in like a *gamer*, not just a passive moviegoer. This philosophy has been my number-one priority ever since Ocarina of Time. If we design movies only in terms of cinematic experience, they enter the realm occupied by the *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* series, and that isn't comparing apples to apples, so to speak. Interactivity is the gaming industry's biggest advantage, and I believe in playing that up with potent images based on gameplay. There's a trend that some games are bringing film directors into the creative mix—a mistake, in my opinion. From a film director's point of view, game movies may not live up to their silver-screen standards, but I like to probe deeper than the cinematic surface. Exactly what role does a movie have in a game? That's what I ask myself every time I design my creative plan for a project. And in Twilight Princess, we're probing even deeper, considering many new ideas about how to involve the player even more actively in the movies.



I hope that Zelda will . . . regain her cheer by the end of the game, but I suspect that it may not be in Hyrule's destiny. . . .

Interactivity is the gaming industry's biggest advantage, and I believe in playing that up with potent images based on gameplay.

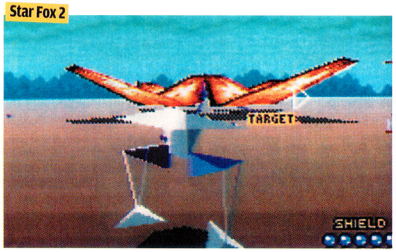
Lights . . . Camera . . . Action!

Let me probe even deeper yet into my own past with Nintendo. When I started my Nintendo career in 1989, it was just before the Super NES opened a new universe of thinking about game design in Japan. I did a little programming on Pilotwings at first, then worked on our internal course-editing program for Kirby's Dream Course. But soon after that, I was put on a highly ambitious project: Star Fox 2. I was working on player and camera control, which carried the concept much farther than the earlier Super NES game. It was a 360-degree 3-D shooter with battle-sim-like elements. You could also morph your flying fighter into a mech that could touch down to jump, climb and navigate the landscape extensively. In order to give the player comfortable play control over such a free-roaming environment, we knew that we had to develop a breakthrough camera system.

In those days, there hadn't been any 3-D games that had a camera that would allow the player to get a great sense of action and movement. Most developers had simply stuck the camera's pivot point onto the character's head. To better feel character action, I detached the camera and had it chase the character instead. In a way, this technique would convey the more-exciting camera action of a 2-D Super Mario Bros. game to a 3-D environment. As a second project on Star Fox 2, I also worked on many of its cut-scenes. I hadn't yet had my Ocarina of Time awakening, and I created the animations with programming rather than gameplay. The development team liked my work, which started me down a path that led to my current work of supervising demo movies and cut-scenes. Unfortunately, Star Fox 2 was a little ahead of its time and never released, but the project was a major turning point for my career and game philosophy, and I still have very warm thoughts about the title.

Mr. Miyamoto then asked me to think about how the camera control should work in Super Mario 64. Now *that* was a daunting task—applying what I'd learned from a game like Star Fox 2 to Mario's motions and the complex levels in the huge N64 project. But Miyamoto trusted in my experience and feelings about camera perspectives, and he turned me loose to explore my ideas. And it turned out that gamers really liked the camera control . . . to the point that it became sort of an industry standard. I was pretty happy that it was that well-received. During Ocarina of Time, I continued to supervise camera control, another incredible project, since Link moves so differently from how Mario does.

As the Ocarina camera system became finalized, I began to devote my energy to making some of the cut-scenes and demo movies for the title—about half of those finally used—starting with storyboards and then creating the final versions. It was the first time that I'd guided the process all the way through from inception to completion, which gave me key experience for the work that I do today with Nintendo.



At the same time he started creating cut-scenes, Kawagoe also did radical experiments with the game camera. Without his work on Star Fox 2 for the Super NES, then Super Mario 64 and Ocarina of Time, 3-D gaming might look very different today.

The Sith Sense

When I was in the sixth grade, the first *Star Wars* movie was released in Japan, and it had a profound influence on me. In retrospect, it wasn't because I was seeing things that I'd never seen before. It was because *Star Wars* revealed to me what *could* be seen through filmmaking. Yes, it was a major visual experience, but it also opened the door to my fascination with the technical aspects of creating engaging images, and I consumed everything that I could about special effects, from creation of creatures to optical composition and beyond.

Years ago, I thought that I'd want a job in films, especially working on CGI animation. But the Japanese movie industry was getting smaller then and there weren't many careers in filmmaking. But game development—*that* was seeing explosive growth, technically and artistically. I knew that gamemaking was the place for me, so when I landed a job interview with Nintendo, I took a lot of my creative work with me. Luckily, I got hired. Though I wanted a designer position, that wasn't in the cards, at least to start with. But several projects later, I'd found a much more creative role within the company. I feel very fortunate to have found a great place in the game industry.

But you never know what life will show you, so let's go back to *Star Wars*. To the fourth flick, *Episode I*, where I had an unusual episode of my own! Starting with that movie,

Star Wars has taught me much about story and imagery, plus its influence on . . . music and film techniques . . .

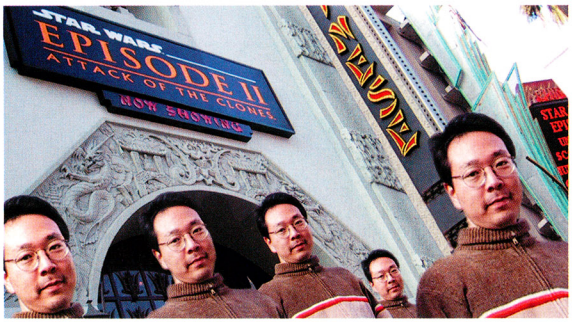


Photo courtesy of Takumi Kawagoe

If he could have cloned himself a hundred times for each Hollywood premiere of a *Star Wars* flick, Kawagoe would have been a happy, happy, happy, happy, happy man.

I've always flown to Los Angeles for the opening day of every *Star Wars* movie. I'm still a fan, obviously, and I wanted to take part in the enthusiasm and celebration in the US. Truth be told, by the time I hit opening day of a *Star Wars* movie, I'd soaked up so much information and anticipated it so much that I was almost like a zombie during the movie. But that's a *Star Wars* fan for you!

Actually, I'm more of a superfan. Try this story on for size: When *Episode I* was released in Japan, there was a popular TV quiz show that would give a contestant one million yen if you answered 100 *Star Wars* questions consecutively. Since I'm a member of one of the *Star Wars* fan clubs in Japan, *and* the chairman of that club was connected to the TV show somehow, *and* Nintendo was a sponsor of the TV show since it was about to release an N64 game tied to the movie, I got a shot at winning the prize. Did I win? No, I failed on the 50th question, but not for the reason you'd think. I wore my Darth Vader suit and mask; that's why. I had to sit in that outfit—with its well-sealed Vader mask—for five hours during the show's production, and the eyeport glass fogged up terribly if I breathed too much. But, of course, oxygen is key. And I almost felt like I was in a little danger. Ironic, given that Darth Vader's suit is supposed to be life support. So my eyeports fogged up and I couldn't see questions. I learned a lot about perspective that day! But seriously, *Star Wars* has taught me much about story and imagery, plus its influence on the movie industry, from its music and film techniques, even merchandising. Now that the movie episodes are completed, I can't wait to see the upcoming *Star Wars*-related TV series that George Lucas has promised to fans.

A Mind in Motion

As much as I insist that game cut-scenes and demos must be based on gameplay, you can still learn a lot of creative techniques from films. Fortunately, watching movies is my big hobby. As far as movies go, I think that quality is much better than quantity. I'll go see the same movie many times. And when I watch them at home, I'll rewind my favorite scenes many times, taking in everything that I can about how the scene works. Sometimes I'll even put those elements in my "creativity drawer," and use them for inspiration on game projects. Here's a good example: When I had to create a demo of Majora's Mask, a game that had a very strange atmosphere, my mind found some unusual inspiration, Woody Allen's movie *Husbands and Wives*. In it, there's an eccentrically edited scene in which actor Liam Neeson is getting psychotherapy, and Allen has the camera hop around Neeson without a break in conversation, which creates the strangest impression! So when I created the Majora's demo showing the Mask Seller, I used a similar idea to capture the spirit of that very bizarre character. Currently, the movie *Mind Game*, directed by Masaaki Yuasa, is my fave movie. Unlike most animated movies in Japan, which are crafted with a delicate sensibility, *Mind Game* portrays its world in a strange, deconstructed way. It's beautiful and throws the viewer off balance with potent impact. Maybe if there's another Majora-like project in my future, based on a bizarre world, perhaps I can reopen my creative drawer and revisit *Mind Game* for fresh insights.

Around the time that we were developing Super Mario Sunshine, Nintendo decided to create a team specifically devoted to movie creation, and that's where I work today. The team oversees the quality of all movies in Nintendo games. Another responsibility of this team is for the production of motion-capture data for game development—which has strongly come into play for Twilight Princess like never before in a Zelda game. Though our team is also focused on the creative work for other titles, I'd have to say that 50%, maybe 60%, of our time is going into Twilight Princess right now. With the kind of talent that we've got on our team, I'm continually impressed by the work I see being done every day. And because our creations directly use game data, it's critical to maintain great communication with all of the various development teams. Since the Twilight Princess development team is so enormous, that's quite a challenge, even though it sometimes seems that the longtime Zelda developers on the team have a telepathic connection! But with so many people involved, communications and scheduling are proving essential for keeping everyone on the same page.

I still have a little time to dream about other things: Drawing has been one of my major interests since I was young, and now I love to draw with my own kids. I sometimes wonder if it might be possible to develop an animated-movie version of the Super NES classic Mario Paint, but one that would let people create animated art in a very simple, casual way. I'll keep dreaming. But for now I need to devote myself entirely to Twilight Princess. You wouldn't believe how serious people can get when they think about working on a project that aspires to be greater than even a hallmark like Ocarina of Time! But even though E3 is now a half year behind us, the impact that the game and trailer had on the crowds stays high in our minds. And personally, though some might think that making Twilight Princess stay true to the Zelda series and pushing the game to live up to fan expectations are two different things, I believe that they're one and the same. I can't say more, but believe me when I say that Twilight Princess sees its new ideas through a *very* Legend of Zelda perspective.

Ironic, given that Darth Vader's suit is supposed to be life support.

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NP TOP 200

THE COUNTDOWN CONTINUES

We're over halfway done now. Which of your favorites have made our list?

By Pete Michaud

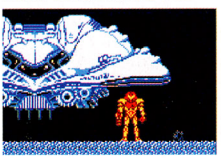
	Game Name	System	Release Date
120	Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour	GCN	2003
119	Banjo-Kazooie	N64	1998
118	Kirby: Canvas Curse	DS	2005
117	PilotWings 64	N64	1996
116	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	GCN	2002
115	Crystalis	NES	1990
114	Earthworm Jim	SNES	1994
113	Bionic Commando	NES	1988
112	Skies of Arcadia: Legends	GCN	2003
111	Ogre Battle 64: Person of Lordly Caliber	N64	2000
110	Zelda II: The Adventure of Link	NES	1988
109	Ikaruga	GCN	2003
108	Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	GBA	2001
107	Tales of Symphonia	GCN	2004
106	Super Punch-Out!!	SNES	1994
105	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	GCN	2001
104	Metal Gear	NES	1988
103	Mega Man X	SNES	1994
102	Tetris Attack	SNES	1996
101	Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	GCN	2002

98: MARIO PARTY

Nintendo has invented many genres, and the console party game is among them. When this title hit the shelves, gamers partied like it was 1999.

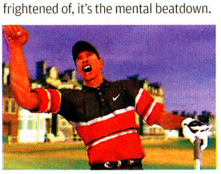
85: METROID II: RETURN OF SAMUS

Unlike other Nintendo franchises, the Metroid series follows a definitive timeline. I won't forget my first trip to SR-388; this was Game Boy at its finest.



116: TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

In the '80s, it was facing Iron Mike in the ring that scared us. This decade, it's not a physical fight with Tiger that we're frightened of, it's the mental beatdown.



104: METAL GEAR

Years ahead of its time, Metal Gear stands as the grandfather of today's stealth games—poor translation aside.

	Game Name	System	Release Date
100	Perfect Dark	N64	2000
99	Excitebike	NES	1985
98	Mario Party	N64	1999
97	1080° Snowboarding	N64	1998
96	WarioWare: Touched!	DS	2005
95	Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat	GCN	2005
94	*Star Wars* Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader	GCN	2001
93	Rayman 2: The Great Escape	N64	1999
92	Pokémon Puzzle League	N64	2000
91	Mario Tennis	N64	2000
90	Donkey Kong Country	SNES	1994
89	Ninja Gaiden	NES	1989
88	Pokémon: Ruby/Sapphire/Emerald	GBA	2003/ 2005
87	Tecmo Bowl	NES	1989
86	Secret of Mana	SNES	1993
85	Metroid II: Return of Samus	GB	1991
84	Luigi's Mansion	GCN	2001
83	Killer 7	GCN	2005
82	Star Fox	SNES	1993
81	Resident Evil Zero	GCN	2002

5 Best Import Only

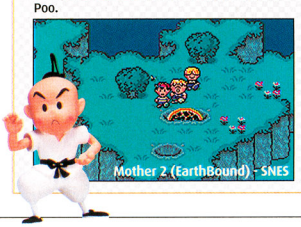
5. Fire Emblem: Fuuin no Tsurugi - GBA
If this game had jumped the pond, the back story of Roy (of Smash Bros. fame) would be known.

4. Giftpia - GCN
This game was so trippy that it actually shipped with a pacifier and a glow stick.

3. Sin and Punishment - N64
Treasure's N64 masterpiece was the swan song for the console. Maybe we'll see a sequel?

2. Final Fantasy III - SNES
I'm not sure if any of you have heard of this series—it has a small but loyal following.

1. Mother 1+2 - GBA
The US has never received Mother 1 in any form, but that does not diminish our love for Poo.



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PlayStation.2
XBOX
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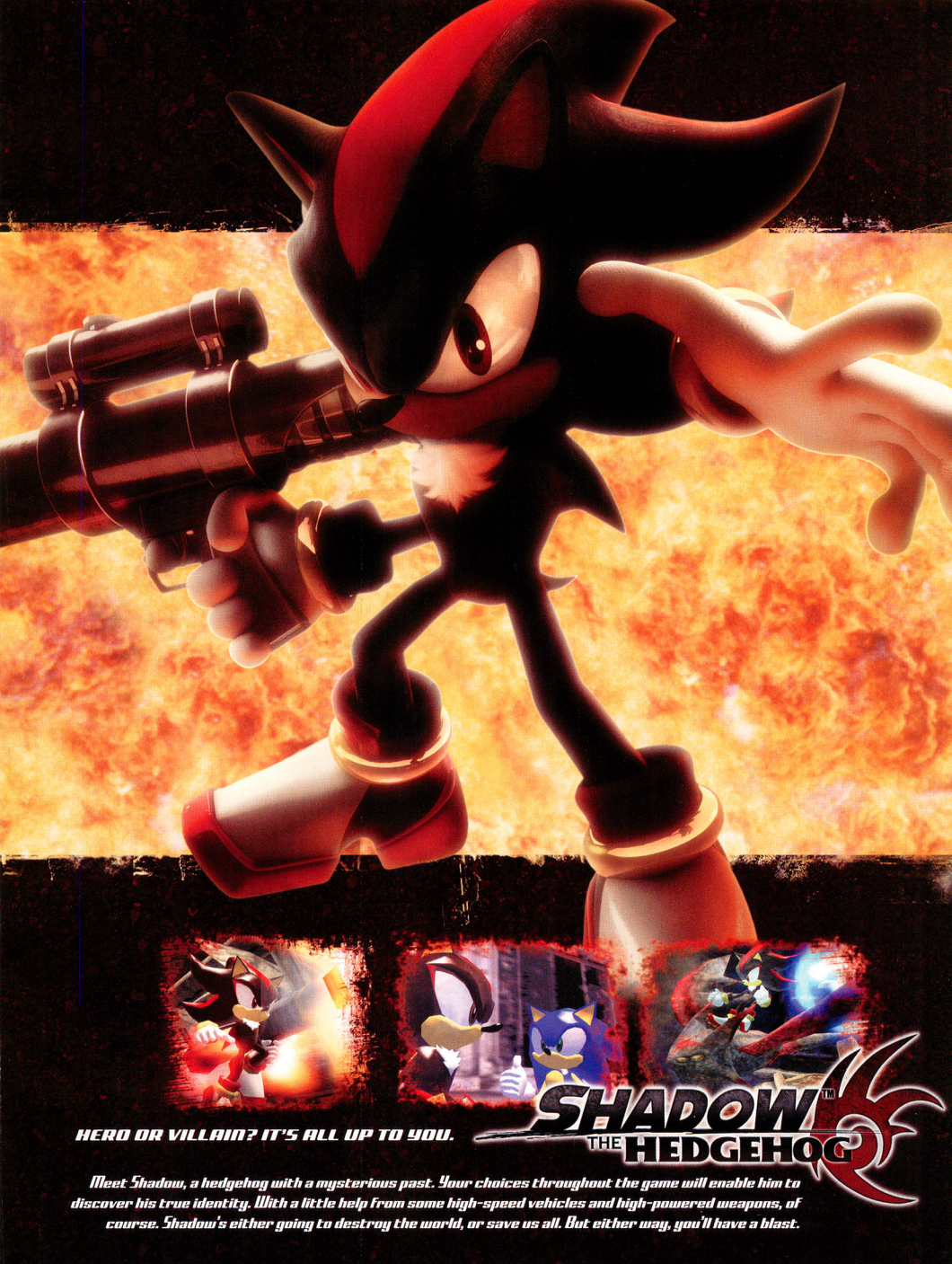
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SHADOW™ THE HEDGEHOG
Meet Shadow, a hedgehog with a mysterious past. Your choices throughout the game will enable him to discover his true identity. With a little help from some high-speed vehicles and high-powered weapons, of course. Shadow's either going to destroy the world, or save us all. But either way, you'll have a blast.

DS Brings It!

25 World-Changers

The DS scene is a hotbed of exploding trends and gotta-play games, just like Iwata promised it would be. Check out what's moving, shaking and taking names.

By Steven Grimm

Illustration by Asaf Hanuka

1 Wi-Fi!

Mario will bump into millions of new friends via warp pipes.

Everyone who nabs a Wi-Fi-enabled DS game will give the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection a go. That's Satoru Iwata's vision, which goes far beyond the typically dismal online trial and adoption rates seen on other systems. During the Nintendo prez's TGS keynote, he spelled out his reasoning. It will be easy to connect to the Wi-Fi hotspots that unify the globe, whether you're in public or using your own home's network. Pipe dream? As Nintendo preps for the November debut of Mario Kart DS and the future launches of Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, Animal Crossing: Wild World and Metroid Prime Hunters, hotspot details that will knock your socks off will emerge. But that's only part of the secret. Iwata says that the experience of connecting and playing has to be as fun and simple as plunking your butt down on your couch with friends. From what we've seen, we can vouch for the connection. Easy-peasy. As for the "friend" part, Nintendo plans to give you control over who gets into your "Wi-Fi gaming room" with tools such as Friends Roster. When you register your first game with the network, you'll get your unique Friend Key, which allows any gamer to add you to his own game's Friends Roster during a wireless LAN session with you. Or you can give people your Friend Key in more-old-fashioned ways (phone, e-mail, chat rooms, whatever), and they can enter it into their Friend Roster manually. There'll be no surprises about who you're playing with; if you want to welcome a high-octane playa into your game sessions, that's your call. More details are forthcoming—as is a new world of Nintendo gaming.

2 Map-Happy

Confused about your orientation? Not anymore.

It's not the sexiest advance, but it's quickly becoming a must-have: persistent maps. Having a map at hand on the second screen lets you get your bearings in a way that's been impossible on single-screened handhelds. Console racers can easily tuck a map into a TV-screen corner, but pre-DS racers? Not enough screen space. Upcoming DS racers like Mario Kart DS, Burnout Legends and Need for Speed: Most Wanted are all using at-a-glance orientation to help you prep for dead man's curves, get defensive against cars breathing down your tailpipe and know when to go turbo. And Mario Kart DS one-ups the competition with a map that lets you zoom in to see incoming shells. Even Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow is using a dungeon map to keep your mental compass from shattering. There's always been miles of trekking and backtracking in Konami's series, and so the handy aid is a godsend. Maps might not be sexy, but feeling lost always ruins the mood.

3 Joe Flips Out

Scratch, Slide, Split—Viewtiful Joe mutates into a far more touchy hero.

In Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble, Capcom's hero takes to the DS so easily that you'd think his two GCN epics were test runs. What's thrilling about the upcoming game isn't just that VJ's hypercombat and crazed style have made the leap from the console; it's how the new Scratch, Slide and Split powers take the DS to places where no one else has gone. Of course, not just any series could debut powers that let you slash the action like you're splicing and editing movie celluloid (Split), or flip the dual views like flapjacks (Slide) to pop foes and smash glass when a zoomed-in scene is on the touch screen. Or rub the screen to shake VJ's movie-set world and drop ceiling props on foes (Scratch). Only Joe could get away with being that nuts.

4 Control Freaky

Hasn't been this wild since 1980.

Crazy-but-easy control got the masses in arcades back in the day (see: Missile Command and Tempest). Let the good times roll: Meteos, Pac 'N Roll and Bust-a-Move DS are pure arcadia.

5 Sim Life

Sims get busier than a Hilton.

In the DS version of The Sims 2, you'll turn a fleabag hotel into a resort full of personality. Yours, to be exact. The game would be a chore without stylus control. Moving furniture, mixing music, killin' vermin—all a snap.

6 Got It on the DL

Download Play: no longer secret.

Why gamemakers didn't include more Download Play in the first wave of DS games baffles the mind. Multiplayer matches are a win/win, as the suits say. Mario Kart DS will offer 8P races via one game card, and Burnout Legends, Sonic Rush and SBK: Snowboard Kids are among the many titles diving into downloading.

7 Traumatized!

Trauma Center puts your patience on the table.

Inspiration would have had to strike us repeatedly, causing serious brain damage, before we could have come up with a DS concept like Atlus's Trauma Center: Under the Knife. Sterilize your stylus before this fun surgery title, because it's more versatile than a Swiss Army Knife: it puts a syringe, a laser, an ultrasound probe, a lance and a suction tube in your hand.

8 Dark Arts

Drawpendo! The DS takes a page from the PC spell book.

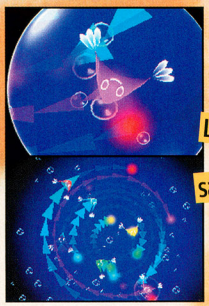
Spell-drawing exploded on PCs when god-game Black & White turned the mouse into a magic wand, letting players sketch shapes to cause fires and other mayhem. The DS now dares to go there with Potter, Castlevania and Spyro. But will Black & White Creatures, due next summer, bring its signature touch to the DS? We're dying to find out.

9 Fuzzy Logic

The sensory Roverload in Nintendogs teaches us how to keep it real.

How real does it feel? That's the question we've asked again and again as gaming has grown over the years. And while a world of developers has toiled away on tweaking graphics and adding smarts to AI, Nintendo made the next leap in realistic feel by simply letting us pet a puppy. That's a bitter pill for those who praise every new advance in polygon count, but it's a powerful brew for everyone else. Gamers loved the hyperrealism of Resident Evil 4, but could it love us back? Even previous life sims, when prodded by buttons and cursors, just don't come close to the emotional impact of petting a golden retriever and seeing it roll over to give up its belly for more of the same. Or a dachshund chasing its tail after you pull it. Or a beagle yelp when you rub it too hard. Not to mention the impressive voice control that connects people to their often-willful pups. But while the many unlockable breeds will keep Nintendogs owners in heavy petting for a long time, what's going to make these players sit up and beg in the months ahead? The next life simulator swimming into view is Electroplankton, in which the musical, microscopic life-forms are every bit as responsive to touch (and some of them to your voice) as the Nintendogs pups. Two other games will dabble in feel-real when the DS version of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire brings the Care of Magical Creatures to life with touch and mic control, and Harvest Moon DS lets you wash you farm dog, shear your sheep and milk your cow. But Majesco's Black & White Creatures will try to trump them all by letting you guide the life of a 50-foot-tall beast with reinforcing or discouraging strokes—and commands, since taking such a megacritter out for a walk can mean life or death for innocent bystanders.

Your pet in Black & White Creatures may try to eat people. Like that? A little tummy rub will encourage it.



Think of Electroplankton as the microscopic world that lives within the water dish in Nintendogs.

Life will never be the same now that we can touch games just as deeply as they touch us.

10 Manhandled!

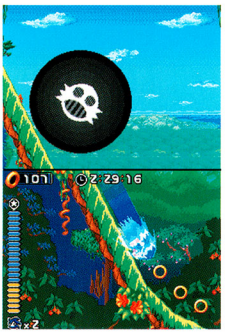
You can finally violate a game's personal space.

There's something about Trace Memory, Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow, Lost in Blue, Animal Crossing: Wild World, Trauma Center and Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble: directly handling stuff in the game world. And until holodeck technology is perfected, that's the closest to virtual sensuality that we're ever gonna get.

11 Bad Altitude

Twice the sky = twice the high!

Acrophobic? Stay away from Sonic Rush, which uses the DS as one supertall screen. Running down insane slopes at breakneck speed—that's the Sonic we respect. Guilty Gear: Dust Strikers, Bust-a-Move DS and Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time are also going vertical. Hopefully you don't get nosebleeds at high altitudes.



12 Pinball Wizardry

Tilting, flipping, shaking—the DS is a pinball dream machine.

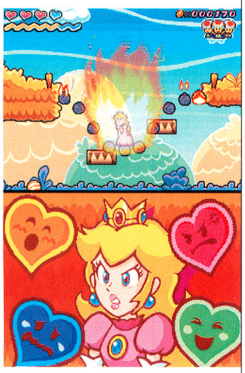
We wouldn't blame Samus if she went multi-ballistic over Metroid Prime Pinball. It's the first Metroid game in which she's completely upstaged. Don't get us wrong: 35.73% of the reason that we're bonkers for MPP is how brilliantly the developers at Fuse Games have tapped Samus action, having the bounty hunter roll around the field in Morph Ball form, sometimes taking a break to stand up and fire at swarming Shriekbats or to leap into action in bonus modes. We're also shocked to see how well Fuse has welded Metroid Prime's steely textures and eerie sounds onto pinball tables, not to mention how awesome the boss battles have turned out. But the other 64.27% of our Metroid Prime Pinball obsession stems from the pinball itself. Playing MPP is like owning a portable table. The dual screens put a supertall field close to your hands. The touch screen lets you tilt the table. The Rumble Pak vibrates at all the right moments. Pure genius. The total effect? You've got to play it to believe it. Fortunately, MPP has an 8P Download Play combat mode, too. (Now ya have no excuse.)

13 Painted Love

Don't brush off this DS advance.

Paint programs are hardly new. But stylus painting is much more user-friendly, and has sparked a customization renaissance with skateboards (Tony Hawk's American Sk8land), vehicles (Mario Kart DS, Need for Speed: Most Wanted) and lots o' surfaces in Animal Crossing.

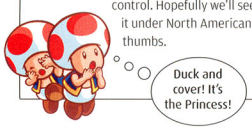
Artsy fartsy? Let 'er rip on the DS.



14 Thumbs-Up for Controls

Touch-screen buttons grow up.

Just because you can design touch buttons, should you? They've felt tacked-on so far, but well-thought-out controls are emerging in Tony Hawk's American Sk8land and SBK: Snowboard Kids, among others. And Super Princess Peach takes it all the way with emotion control. Hopefully we'll see it under North American thumbs.



15 Delicious Menus

A new way to check your stash.

Why have we been willing to interrupt games to dip into menus? Now with developers nailing menus to a screen (in Advance Wars, Harvest Moon DS and Lunar Dragon Song) you can keep your head in the game.

16 Lost on the DS

Island survival gives up secrets.

Maps keep you sane, minigames keep you alive and shutting your DS keeps water boiling: Konami pulled up a whopper with Lost in Blue. Fishing, milking, starting fires and MacGyver-ing animal traps from sticks? Get stranded—ASAP.

17 Amazing Trace

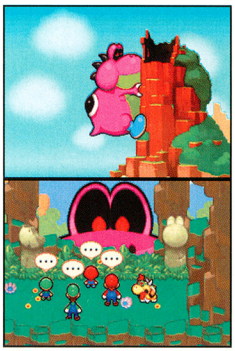
Mystery unfolds in bizarre ways.

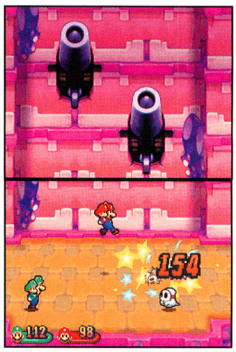
Thinking of Trace Memory as Myst DS misses the bigger picture. One screen shows 2-D close-ups that you can literally probe as you puzzle through a mansion. And the game gives you hero control via stylus on the 3-D screen, and uses dual screens in eerie ways that we wouldn't dare spoil.

18 Bros. Grow

Dual-screen designs man up for the M&L sequel.

From what we've seen so far, Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time might be a masterpiece. Not just because of its artful use of 2-D style. Or the 4-D time-traveling that teams Mario and Luigi with their baby incarnations, which helps them bust dungeons that rival the ones in Four Swords for sheer ingenuity. No, M&L's new RPG will turn heads with its dual-screen designs. Everywhere you turn (as the quartet fights off an alien invasion) you'll see both screens used in ways that set the standard for what DS RPGs can be. First off, when not performing other tricks, the upper screen is a map—highly useful to navigate the game's sprawling world. At other times, the screens depict supertall scenes, like showing the curtains hanging above a castle courtroom, or reflect simultaneous action, such as when UFOs rush to blast castle towers while people freak out on the floor. Battle scenes grow so tall that cavern stalactites and the tops of evergreen trees form backdrops. The height also allows Pirahna Plants and other bosses to get XXL and lets evil helpers fly in to drop weapons. It's an RPG in a class of its own.





The two-screen designs throw down a new gauntlet for DS RPGs: dual exploration. The two duos—the younger and elder bros—can split apart, which lets players swap control between the pairs. You can use adult Mario and Luigi to hurl the babies down pits or into clouds, then use the tots to hit switches, for instance. As you take on far-more-complex split designs, you'll need to think carefully about where each pair is, and, just as importantly, what evils might be closing in on the pair that's sitting around on the other screen.

19 Spread the Herd

Animal Crossing gets connected. Party at my house!

Name something you loved about Animal Crossing on the Nintendo GameCube. Chattin' up animals? Shopping for the perfect stereo? Obsessing about your home's layout? Visiting other villages? Fishing for salmon; netting butterflies; digging up T-rex bones? Using the paint program to design clothes? Typing up correspondence? Or how about wandering the forest aimlessly after a crappy day in the real world? Whatever it is, imagine it being easier to do. Much, much easier.

Partly, its ease is due to Animal Crossing being 100% stylus-controlled. Though you can use buttons, we've played through hours at a time—doing all of the above—with one hand on the stylus, the other hand slowly emptying a bag of Cheetos (sold separately). Any action shifts to the touch screen seamlessly. Run by drawing your stylus away from your character. Pick up stuff by tapping it. Spin furniture in your pad by slashing sideways. Drag and drop items between your inventory and the world. Create your own constellations (one of the many new hobbies in the DS game) by connecting the dots. No doubt, the paint program is far more fun with a stylus-brush. And you can now type as quickly as you can peck away at the keyboard.

More important than the other improvements, though, is that for the first time, players can visit other players by LAN or Wi-Fi connection to engage in any pursuits they like, such as trading furniture, swapping designs, making up competitions and so on. Never met another Animal Crossing fan? You're about to meet a billion of 'em.

20 Caddy Smack

Nintendo moves the DS fore-ward.

Tiger had a good tee-off, but Touch Golf has the sweetest connection to the green that we've ever seen. How about a release date?

21 Gosh Darnia

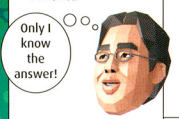
Chronicles gets co-op done first.

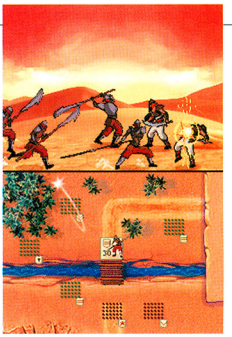
Why haven't we seen a flood of co-op dungeon-busting on the DS? Well, LAN-tastic news: Heroes can go co-op, even explore opposite ends of an area in Chronicles of Narnia.

22 Beyond Games

"Other planets" hold brainiacs.

Iwata promised that the DS would go to "other planets" of experience. In Japan, that's meant megasuccess for DS Brain Training. Will Ryuta Kawashima's genius spread to North America?





23 Shock Tactics

Ready for the brutal truth?

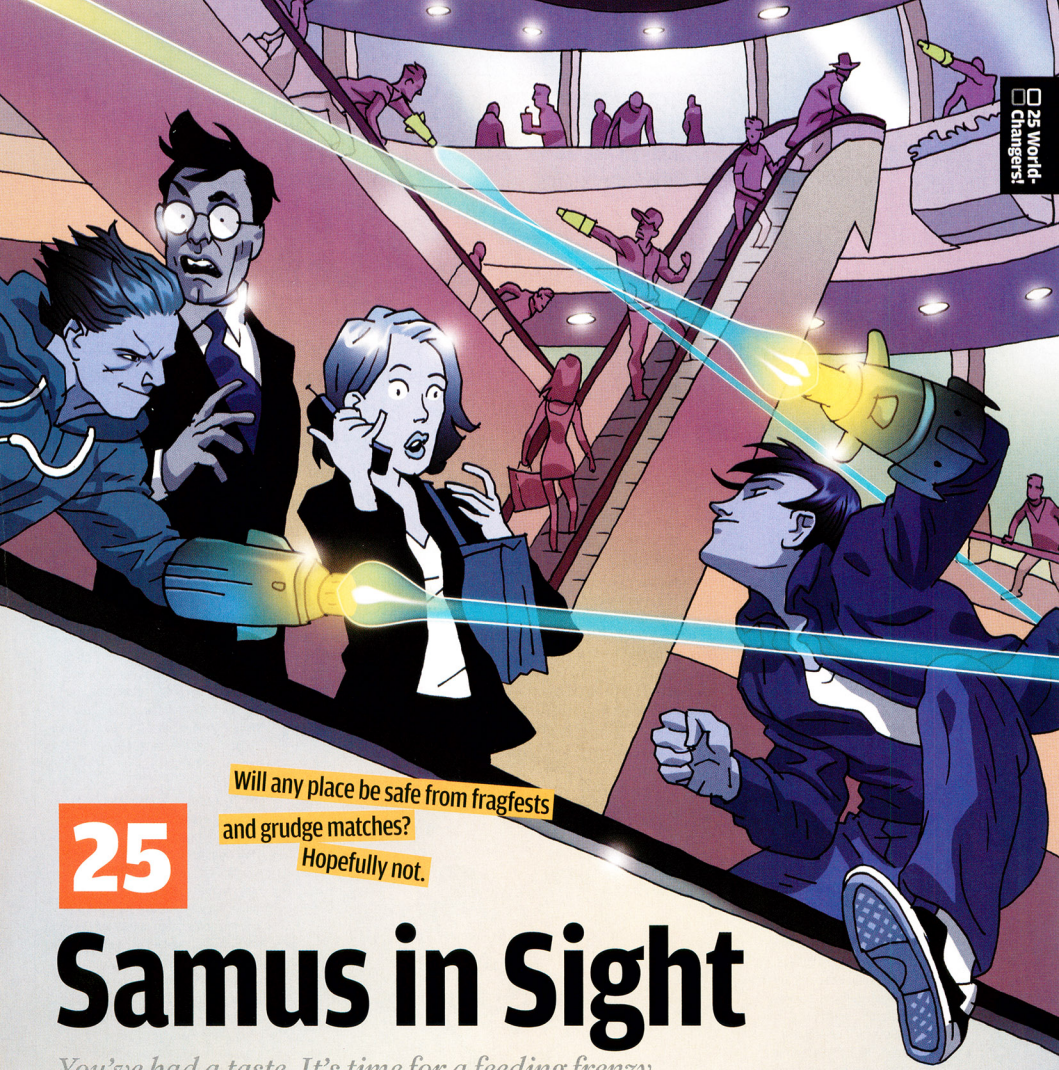
Tactics games are boring—so think people who've never played 'em. But with three games—Battles of Prince of Persia, Age of Empires: The Age of Kings and Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires—zooming in on violence via the second screen, they should gain true perspective.

24 Total Drama Screens

Manga in motion? Sorta.

We were blown away by the first dual-screen cinematics we saw for Metroid Prime Hunters, but we've been caught off guard by another storytelling method that's shown up in games like Ultimate Spider-Man and Trace Memory. Both fly series of illustrations through one or both screens—a strangely effective way to burn images into our minds.

Ultimate Spidey chucks its comic panels into view as if the game's hopped up on Pop Rocks.



Will any place be safe from fragfests and grudge matches? Hopefully not.

25 Samus in Sight

You've had a taste. It's time for a feeding frenzy.

The atmosphere is deadly calm at the moment. But when Metroid Prime Hunters season opens next year, that's all going to change. If everyone who's played the demo—how many millions?—signs on for a tour of duty, you probably won't be able to enter a public space without getting caught in the crossfire of a LAN match. And the big announcement that MPH will tap into the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection has gamers dreaming about hunting bounties on a far larger scale. Details about how Nintendo plans to connect opponents through the network are still more heavily guarded than a mother lode of Phazon, but you can be certain that it'll follow Nintendo's philosophy of easy access and sweet gameplay. Here's what that translates into: killer Wi-Fi grudge matches.

What's far clearer, now that we've played through a full level of Metroid Prime Hunters's single-player adventure, is how awesomely the Metroid Prime experience has translated to the DS. We've blasted through space in Samus's ship to reach a space station, which might have been abandoned by an ancient race but has attracted all sorts of creatures who are begging to see the business end of Samus's Arm Cannon. Fortunately, the DS's unique FPS controls, which have mimicked PC mouse-aided control through the touch screen nicely, prove just as natural over the long haul of an entire mission. We've also confronted Kanden, the mad-experiment-turned-hunter. The cold killer squirmed out of reach several times in a creepy worm guise before we reached the main confrontation, which let us put our DS FPS skillz to the test. He shifted between heavy-gunning humanoid shape and bomb-dropping worm form in a multistage boss battle that rivals some of the most memorable in Metroid history. Will all the bounty hunters prove so meaty? Part of the answer lies in how well a world of DS FPS gamers exploit them in battle—and we'll find that out early in 2006.

INTERNATIONAL TREASURE

NP sits down for an in-depth interview with the man behind Gunstar Super Heroes.

By Steve Thomason

Among hard-core gamers, Treasure is one of the most revered developers in the world. The company behind such cult classics as Dynamite Headdy and Ikaruga has a long history of crafting genre-defining masterpieces. While in Japan, I had the opportunity to chat with Treasure president and cofounder **Masato Maegawa.**

Nintendo Power: First, could you tell us a bit about Treasure's history and how the company got started?
Masato Maegawa: We wanted to start a small company so we could do whatever we want. That was very important to us.

[Though Maegawa is reluctant to talk about it, the founding members of Treasure previously worked at Konami on such titles as Contra III: The Alien Wars, Rocket Knight Adventures and The Simpsons arcade game. -Ed.]

NP: How many teams are now working within the company?
MM: There are four teams, each team working on one title.

NP: There's long been a perception that Treasure has a no-sequel policy, but recently the company created follow-ups to both Gunstar Heroes and Guardian Heroes. Could you clarify what your stance is on sequels?
MM: Actually, it's not like there is a policy that we don't create sequels. For Gunstar Super Heroes and Advance Guardian Heroes, the members of the original development teams got together and they came up with the concepts for the sequels. But we've never had a policy against it.

NP: What was it like working with Sega again on a Gunstar Heroes title?
MM: Well, I've worked with Sega for over 10 years. I know people at Sega very well and I know how to work with them, so it was very easy. We didn't have any difficulties.

NP: Is there much difference working with different publishers? For instance, is there any difference between working with Nintendo and working with Sega?
MM: Well, of course there are differences between publishers. But from a development standpoint, there are a lot of similarities between Sega and Nintendo. Both companies work with us in very similar ways.

NP: Treasure's titles often boast some of the most amazing visuals for the particular piece of hardware they're developed for. For example, Gunstar Super Heroes is one of the best-looking games on Game Boy Advance. How does the team manage to achieve such stunning results?
MM: Our goal is to max out whichever platform we're working on. We try to do whatever we want and see how far we can push the hardware. At the end, people might recognize the good visuals, but that's not really our purpose. We just want to utilize the functionality of each system to create the best game possible.

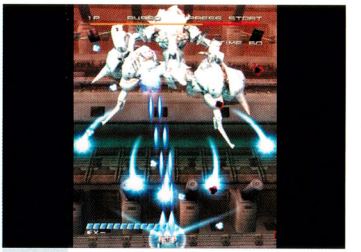
NP: Treasure is also known for creating incredible boss battles. What's your philosophy behind that?
MM: Usually, other developers have a designer create the boss first, then a programmer implements it into the game. But what we do is have the programmer collaborate on the boss from the beginning. He knows how to handle a boss within the game, so his input can help make the encounter truly outstanding.

NP: Are there any genres that Treasure has yet to explore (such as RPGs) that you'd like to try?
MM: Yes, we would love to create games in different genres, such as an RPG, but the reality is that the company is pretty small. So what we can do is

"Our goal is to max out whichever platform we're working on. We try to see . . . how far we can push the hardware."

kind of limited. Also, we already know how to create good action, fighting and shooting games, so we tend to stick with those genres.

NP: Recently Treasure seems to be focused more on handheld games. What's the motivation behind that?
MM: What we're best at is 2-D action, and every time we decide to make a 2-D action game, it ends up on a handheld. Gamers expect 3-D on home console games, so it would be very challenging to create a successful 2-D game on a console.



Ikaruga

NP: Do you think we'll ever see another Gunstar Heroes or Guardian Heroes on home consoles, be it 2-D or 3-D?
MM: Actually, [looks at Sega PR rep and laughs] . . . we don't know yet. It would be very challenging. Maybe if we do create one, it'll have to be fully polygonal. We would like to make it 2-D, but I don't think it's going to work.

Silhouette Mirage

NP: What about sequels to some of your other games such as Dynamite Headdy or Sin and Punishment?
MM: Speaking of Sin and Punishment, we designed that game specifically for US gamers. We really wanted to release that title in the US. But Nintendo didn't think it would sell 500,000 units, and in the end, they decided not to publish it in the US. We are thinking of doing a sequel to Sin and Punishment, but we also have to keep business considerations in mind. So at this moment, we're not sure. We think US gamers would enjoy it, though, so we'd like to do a sequel.

NP: Treasure has worked with a number of different publishers, but has always remained independent. How important is that independence, and what are some of the challenges that come with it?
MM: We used to work only with Sega. At that time, whenever we would finish a game, Sega would immediately request another title. So we were always sort of guaranteed a publisher for our next title. Now, we can choose whichever title we want to work on. We have more freedom to choose what we want to do, but at the same time, we have to seek out a publisher for every title. So that makes it more challenging.

NP: You've occasionally worked on properties from other publishers, such as Wario World and Silpheed. How has that experience differed from creating your own games, and is it something you'd like to do more of in the future?
MM: Every time we work with a publisher's property, they always promise that Treasure can do whatever we want with it. That has to be part of the contract. [Laughs] So it's not like we have to follow any predetermined rules when creating such a title. As a result, there's not much difference between working on an original game and an existing property.

NP: Are there other specific franchises or properties that you'd like to tackle?
MM: If I had to list them all, you wouldn't be able to fit it on a page. [Laughs] But seriously, what we do is let the team members decide which game they want to make. They don't get any direction from me when it comes to making that decision. I always ask the individual developers what they want to work on.

NP: Are there any other developers that you admire or get inspiration from?
MM: There are many developers that I look up to. But it's kind of hard to single out a few.

NP: Why do you think Treasure has such an enthusiastic fan base?
MM: Well, what we create is for hard-core gamers. So I think our fan base is made up primarily of hard-core gamers. And we really thank them. When we're developing

NP FAVORITES

Crown Jewels

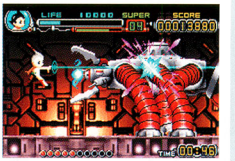
Our top five Treasure games of all time

Guardian Heroes (Sega Saturn)
The hand-drawn graphics and chaotic action hold up incredibly well.

Gunstar Super Heroes/Gunstar Heroes (GBA/Sega Genesis)
No one blows stuff up real good like the Gunstar Heroes.

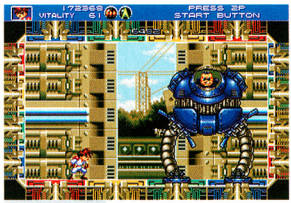
Radiant Silvergun (Sega Saturn)
This import-only shooter is highly sought among collectors.

Sin and Punishment (N64)
One of the N64's greatest action titles never made it out of Japan.



Astro Boy: Omega Factor (GBA)
Treasure's first GBA title proved that innovation was still possible in 2-D.

Mischief Makers



Gunstar Heroes

Wario World

"The original 10 members of the company are all still here. And they're still creating what they want."

a title, we really focus on one specific aspect to make it really good. I think this differs from other titles, and the people who recognize that are hardcore gamers.

NP: Gunstar Super Heroes is a mixture of all-new content and elements from the first game (returning bosses, remade levels, etc.). Why did you go with that approach?
MM: We hoped that fans of the original Gunstar Heroes would be happy about it. We did not reuse any of the original data or programming, and essentially recreated those bosses and stages from scratch. At the concept design stage, I asked the developers not to go back and play the first game again; otherwise, they'd want only to bring back the features from the original. I wanted them to explore new ways to create Gunstar Heroes. So that's why there are some new elements.

NP: How did the Sega cameos come about?
MM: We created these cameos as a way to demonstrate the clarity in graphics that the GBA can produce, and to push the limits of the GBA technology.

NP: Can you talk about what happened with ESP, the collective of developers that included Treasure, Game Arts and a number of other companies?
MM: At this moment, ESP is a publisher rather than a group of small developers as it was originally.

NP: Is Treasure involved with ESP anymore?
MM: Yes, we are working with them on an original title.

NP: How has game development changed since Treasure first started?
MM: Nothing has changed. [Laughs] Maybe other companies hire new people and train them with new titles, but what we do is create the games that we want to create. The original 10 members of the company are all still here. And they're still creating what they want. That concept has not changed.

NP: What are your thoughts on the next-generation systems, and what do you think some of the challenges will be with the new hardware?
MM: We are already working on a next-generation title. The specs are really high compared to previous systems. We are having a hard time deciding where we should stop [in terms of exploiting the hardware].

NP: Have you had any discussions with Nintendo regarding the Revolution?
MM: We have started to talk about the Revolution with Nintendo, but not in any great detail. Please wait a little longer.

NP: Can you give us any hints on any of your upcoming titles?
MM: Well, of course we've already announced Bleach for the Nintendo DS [in Japan]. We're also working on a new shooting/action title.

NP: Finally, anything you'd like to say to your fans in the US?
MM: Including the Genesis era, we believe that the fan base is made up mostly of US gamers. So we really want to thank US gamers. And please look forward to our upcoming titles.

Yellow is either really excited about her new game or she needs to find a bathroom.

REACH OUT AND BEAT SOMEONE.

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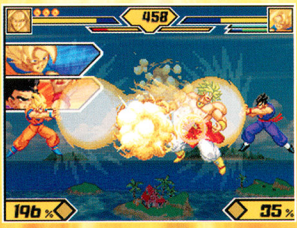

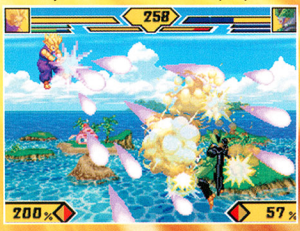

EVERYONE 10+ — Cartoon Violence

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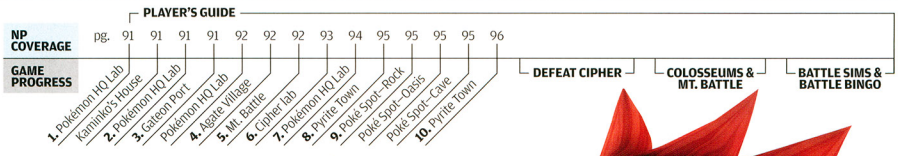
MINING ORRE'S POKéMON

We highlight the ins and outs of Orre, and show you all the ways you can catch 'em all in Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness.

by Chris Shepperd

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



Last month we made our first examination of the wonders and perils of Pokémon XD. This month we dive deeper into the evil plot Cipher has in store for Orre. Along the way, we show you where and how to catch both Shadow and regular Pokémon. From Agate Village to Kaminko's manor, you'll be well on your way to tracking down Shadow Lugia and defeating Cipher for good!

SHAMELESS PLUG FOR THE PLAYER'S GUIDE

There are more Shadow Pokémon in Orre than we could ever hope to cover in one article. For complete strategy coverage and comprehensive Snagging tips for Pokémon XD, pick up the official Nintendo Power player's guide today!

visit www.pokemonxd.com

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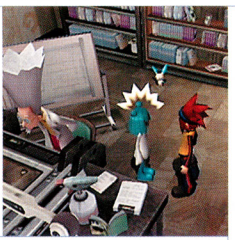
The Adventure Begins

1 MISSING SIS

Jovi is like most little sisters—always getting in trouble. She's gone missing and your mom, Lily, is worried sick. After grabbing the P★DA from your room, head upstairs and talk to Adon, the man hiding under a workbench. He'll tip you off that Jovi most likely headed to Dr. Kaminko's house during a game of hide-and-seek. He'll show you where Dr. Kaminko's manor is on your map.



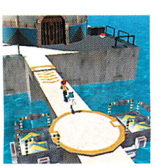
2 SNAG THE SNAG MACHINE

Sure enough, Jovi's been loitering around Kaminko's place. She'll follow you back to the Pokémon HQ Lab. Trouble is brewing back at home—once you locate Professor Krane and he equips you with the Snag Machine, Cipher thugs come and take him away.

In a last-ditch effort to save Professor Krane, you'll battle Spy Naps, a Cipher soldier. Toss a Poké Ball right away—you'll Snag the enemy's cuddly Teddiursa without resistance.

3 PART AND PARCEL

Even though Professor Krane has been kidnapped, his work at the lab must go on. He's been working on a device called the Purify Chamber that can cure Shadow Pokémon. Head to Gateon Port and get the Machine Part so the lab assistants can finish building the device. After bumping into the strange old man Verich, head to the Parts Shop. Talk to the people inside the shop, then locate Perr out on the docks—he'll give you the Machine Part.



Once Perr leaves, you can use the rotating bridges to access areas over the water, including the lighthouse in the northeast corner of Gateon Port. Stand on the arrow pads to spin the bridge pieces toward your intended destination.

Eevee and Its Evolutions

You'll begin the game with a Level-10 Eevee. When you arrive at Gateon Port (see tip 3), you will encounter a sailor in the Parts Shop who shares your love for Eevee.

After you listen to the sailor's story, he'll let you choose a stone to hold. Your Eevee will evolve into one of five different Pokémon depending on which stone you select.

Vaporeon TYPE: WTR
Evolves with Water Stone

Jolteon TYPE: ELC
Evolves with Thunderstone

Flareon TYPE: FIRE
Evolves with Fire Stone

Umbreon TYPE: DRK
Evolves with Moon Shard

Espeon TYPE: PSY
Evolves with Sun Shard

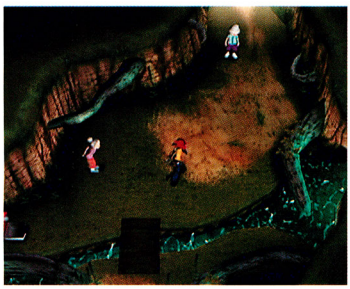
Visit the lone Trainer along the rocks of the far northeast corner of Gateon Port. Fight him and Snag his Shadow Ledyba.

The Trainer at the top of the Gateon Port lighthouse is one of only a handful of non-Cipher battlers to carry a Shadow Pokémon.

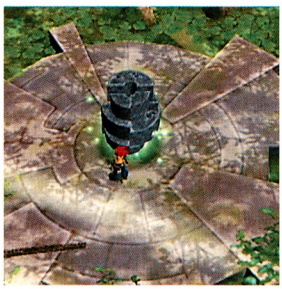
100% Pure Pokémon

4 THE SECRET OF AGATE VILLAGE

When you drop off the Machine Part with Lily, she'll tell you about the Purifying process at Agate Village. Once in Agate Village, head to Eagun's house. He'll rush in and tell you to meet him at the Relic Stone. Head to the cave below the Pokémon Center. Be sure to rest up before you enter the cave—you'll have to fight some Trainers before you reach the sacred spot.



Use the Trainers in Agate Cave to help lower your Shadow Pokémon's Heart Gauges. Hopefully, several Pokémon will be ready for Purification by the time you reach the Relic Stone.



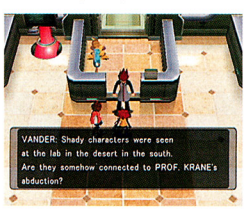
When a Shadow Pokémon is ready for Purification, the Relic Stone will glow green. Walk up to it to Purify a member of your team.

I do believe that one must have a long beard to appear smart.

It's a Long Way to the Top

5 VANDER CHAT

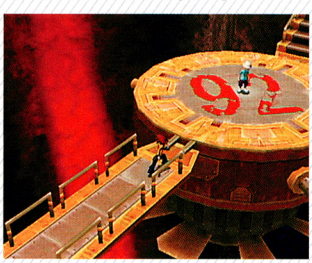
After you've purified your first Pokémon at the Relic Stone, Eagun will take you back to his place. He knows a guy named Vander at Mt. Battle who might know the whereabouts of the people that took Professor Krane. To get to Vander, you'll need to scrap with a few of his students, but they won't pose much of a threat.



You won't be able to compete at Mt. Battle until later in the game. Vander will notify you via your P★DA when Mt. Battle opens its doors to challengers.

Triple-Digit Triumph

Besides being an excellent way to gain valuable experience for your Pokémon, Mt. Battle offers the chance to capture three rare Pokémon. If you can battle your way all the way to the top and defeat all 100 Trainers without exiting, you'll be rewarded with the chance to pick from three Pokémon. Don't worry; you'll be able to save while climbing the path, and your team will be healed after every battle. But if you leave, you'll have to restart from the beginning.

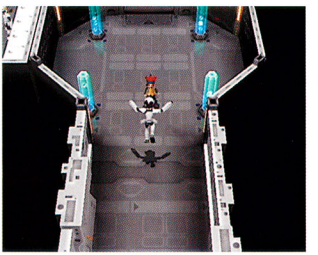


As you climb higher up Mt. Battle, the battles become more and more brutal. The final Trainers you face have Pokémon around Level 80, so be prepared.

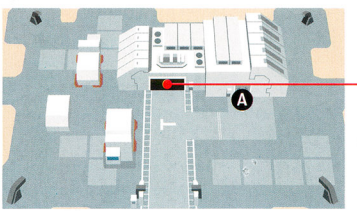
Infiltrate the Base

6 IT'S CRIME-FIGHTING TIME

Just as Vander suspected, Cipher has set up camp in the desert, and you have good reason to believe Professor Krane is somewhere inside. As you explore the underground passages of the Cipher Lab, you'll be greeted rather rudely by Cipher Peons and lab workers. Be sure to return to Pokémon Healing Machines frequently to restore your Pokémon. Keep your eyes open for Shadow Pokémon—several of Cipher's minions will have them in their party.



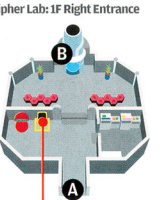
Cipher Lab: Outside



SUPER POTION

POKé BALL (x3)

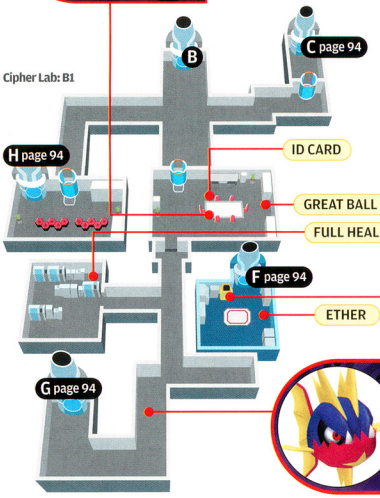
Cipher Lab: 1F Right Entrance



Shroomish L-15+
TYPE: GRS
CIPHER R&D KLOTS

A couple of Pokémon Healing Machines inside the lab are available for you to revive and heal your team.

Cipher Lab: B1



Carvanha L-15+
TYPE: WTR-DRK
CIPHER PEON CABOL

The Hexagon Brothers

The Cipher thugs The Hexagon Brothers aren't all that bright, but they're a mean bunch. You need to defeat only one of them to gain access to the Cipher Lab, but it's worth battling them all because they each have a Shadow Pokémon.

Houndour L-17+
TYPE: DRK-FIRE
CIPHER PEON RESIX

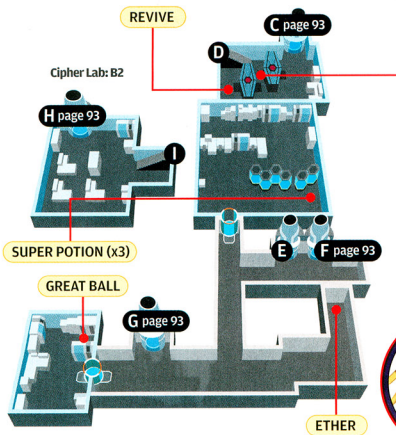
Spheal L-17+
TYPE: WTR-ICE
CIPHER PEON BLUSIX

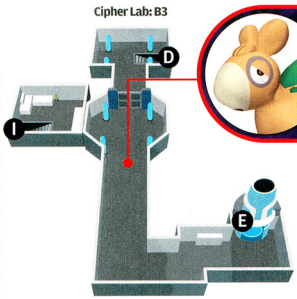
Baltoy L-17+
TYPE: GRD-PSY
CIPHER PEON BROWSIX

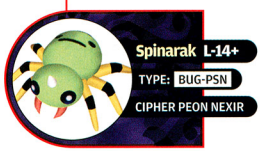
Mareep L-17+
TYPE: ELC
CIPHER PEON YELLOSIX

Gulpin L-17+
TYPE: PSN
CIPHER PEON PURPSIX

Seedot L-17+
TYPE: GRS
CIPHER PEON GREESIX



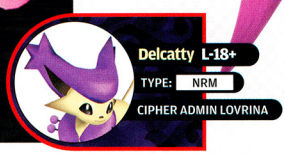




Battle Cipher Admin Lovrina

Be sure to set your team before rescuing Professor Krane—you won't be able to swap out Pokémon before the battle with Lovrina. Lovrina's team is pretty tough—you'll have to swap your team members during battle frequently to make the best use of type advantages. Catching Lovrina's Shadow Delcatty early can shorten the battle by quite a bit.

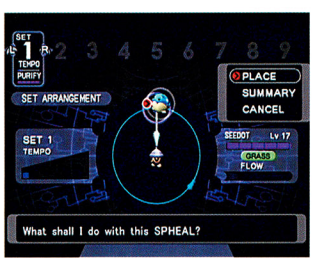
Be sure to have an Electric-type Pokémon (such as Flaaffy) in your party to knock out Lovrina's Wingull and Luvdisc.



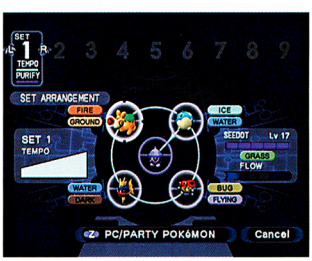
The Purify Chamber Is Up and Running

7 FROM ADVENTURER TO LAB EXPERIMENT

Your return from the Cipher Lab coincides with the completion of the Purify Chamber. Running the Purify Chamber can be complicated at first, but the ability to Purify a bunch of Shadow Pokémon at once and without having to tote them around in your party is a great advantage. One important note: the Purify Chamber can only lower a Shadow Pokémon's Heart gauge—you still need to return to the Pokémon HQ Lab to finish the process. Talk with the scientists in the lab to better understand how the contraption works. They'll help you maximize the machine's Purifying efficiency.



Once you've placed a Shadow Pokémon in the middle of the circle, set regular Pokémon around it so the infected creature can feed off their positive energies.

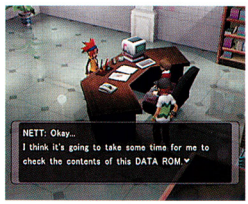


After a Shadow Pokémon has been Purified, you can leave the regular Pokémon in place for the next Purificatation. These Pokémon groups are called sets.

The Sights and Sounds of Pyrite Town

8 DATA DECRYPTION

The scientists at the Pokémon HQ Lab weren't able to decode the Data ROM you picked up after your battle with Lovrina, but they know someone who might be able to. Head to the ONBS station in Pyrite Town and talk with the manager there—he knows a little something about encryption and might help. While in town, check out Pyrite Colosseum, the Duel Square and the plush (but pricey) hotel.



Decoding the Data ROM will take a while, so in the meantime Nett will send you out looking for Duking, the head of Pyrite Colosseum. He's at one of the Poké Spots conducting an interview for an upcoming TV news piece. You can also participate in a Colosseum event to kill a little time.

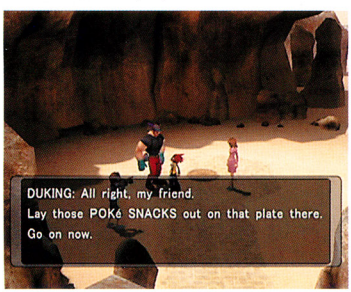
The Duel Square

Across the bridge from Pyrite Colosseum, you'll find some of Pyrite Town's citizens waiting to take on all comers. You won't find any Shadow Pokémon in their ranks, but you can fight them as much as you want to build experience quickly for your team.

Poké Spots

9 WILD ABOUT WILD POKéMON

When you head to the first Poké Spot, Duking is about to begin his interview. He grabs you as a volunteer then shows you how to catch wild Pokémon. To help you get started, he also hands you 10 Poké Snacks and the Spot Monitor, which will let you keep an eye on wild Pokémon that stumble upon your bait.



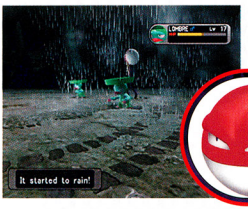
You can catch as many Pokémon as you like at Poké Spots, but each spot will yield only three different kinds of Pokémon. Remember to replenish the spots with Poké Snacks after every battle.

Trade with Duking

The adventurous Duking is always on the lookout for special and rare Pokémon, but he seems to be too busy to track them down himself. If you're able to get your hands on a Wooper, Surskit or Trapinch, Duking will trade it for one of his hard-to-get Pokémon. He'll trade you only the first time you present him with one of the Pokémon he's looking for.

Wanderer Miror B. Appears

The first time you enter the Cave Poké Spot, the stylin' Miror B. swaggers in and challenges you to a duel. He'll take off when you beat him, but he'll leave the Miror Radar so you can find him around Orre. In future encounters with the big-haired boss, he'll have the Shadow Pokémon you weren't able to catch in previous battles in his party.



Miror B. and his gang of Lombre love using a Rain Dance/Water Gun combo.

Voltorb L-19+
TYPE: ELC
WANDERER MIROR B.

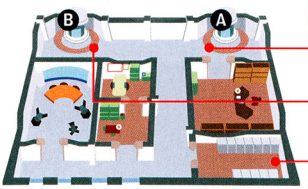
Save the Station!

10 OFF THE AIR

While you were off hunting wild Pokémon, Cipher infiltrated the ONBS television station. They want that Data ROM back and they won't give up until they get it or until you stop them. Be sure to catch the Shadow Makuhita from Cipher Peon Torkin and start Purifying it—the Fighting-type will come in handy shortly.

ONBS Building: 1F

ONBS Building: 2F

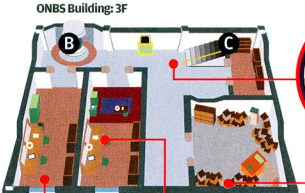


Makuhita L-18+
TYPE: FTG
CIPHER PEON TORKIN

Vulpix L-18+
TYPE: FIRE
CIPHER PEON MESIN

ETHER

ONBS Building: 3F



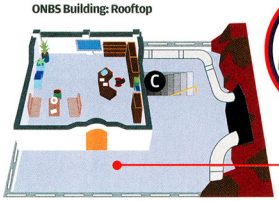
Duskull L-19+
TYPE: GHO
CIPHER PEON LOBAR

HP UP

REVIVE

SOOTHE BELL

ONBS Building: Rooftop



Ralts L-20+
TYPE: PSY
CIPHER PEON FELDAS

Battle Cipher Cmdr Exol

The Makuhita you Snagged on the second floor will help with Exol's Normal- and Steel-type Pokémon. Carry a couple of Revives for this battle—if your Fighting-type gets knocked out, you could be in for a tough fight. Additionally, try to keep a Shadow Pokémon in your party to absorb attacks from Exol's Shadow Mawile.

Mawile L-22+
TYPE: STL
CIPHER CMDR EXOL

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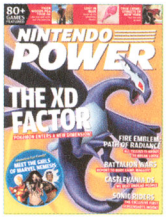

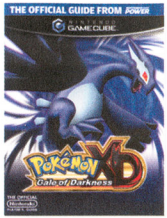

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1. Male **2.** Female

C. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about this month's Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance strategy article?
1. I found it very helpful, and I'll refer to it while playing the game.
2. I don't plan to play the game, but I was still interested to read about it.
3. I found it helpful to a point, and I plan to purchase the strategy guide for more-detailed information.
4. I plan to play the game, but I didn't find the article helpful.
5. I don't plan to play the game, and I didn't find the strategy feature interesting.
6. I haven't read the article yet, but I intend to read it.

D. Which of the statements most closely reflects your feelings about this month's magazine cover?
1. I liked the art, the layout and the text—everything about the cover was great!
2. I liked the Fire Emblem image, but I'd rather see game names than corny headlines.
3. I liked the headlines, but the Fire Emblem image was lame.
4. I didn't like anything about the cover.
5. I didn't pay any attention to what was on the cover.

E. Which of the following sums up your feelings about the Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness strategy article?
1. I found it very helpful, and I'll refer to it while playing the game.
2. I don't plan to play the game, but I was still interested to read about it.
3. I found it helpful to a point, and I plan to purchase the strategy guide for more-detailed information.
4. I plan to play the game, but I didn't find the article helpful.
5. I don't plan to play the game, and I didn't find the strategy feature interesting.
6. I haven't read the article yet, but I intend to read it.
7. I didn't read the article because I don't care about Pokémon XD.

F. Which topic listed below is of the greatest importance to you?
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4. Reviews **5.** Community **6.** Quiz

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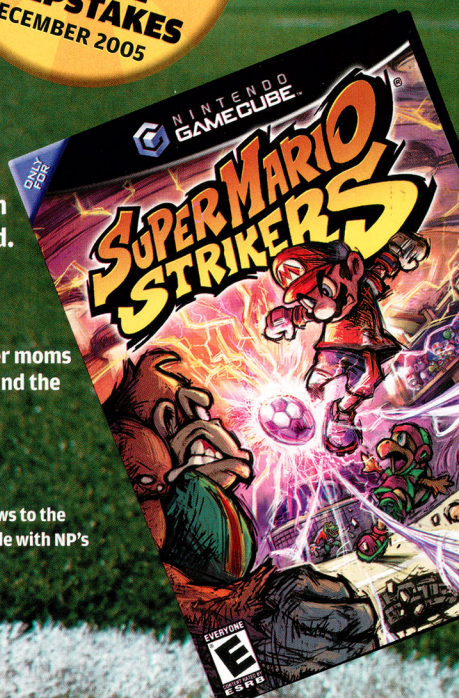

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BITE THE BIG APPLE

Activision's Ultimate Spider-Man is a rumble in the concrete jungle. Rock the story missions with our comprehensive strategies.

By George Sinfield

From Street Performer to Superhero

The comic-book adventures of your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man start on the streets of Queens and Manhattan, where you have free-swinging reign. Race against time, fight crime and search every alley nook and rooftop cranny for hidden items. The game keeps a running tally of your accomplishments in four City Goals categories detailed on this page. Once you've achieved a minimum number of goals in each category, the next story mission will pop up on the map. If you continue to complete goals, you'll build up credit for story missions to follow. The minimum-required totals for each City Goals category are displayed next to our story-mission descriptions.

Tokens

Since there are 190 tokens scattered throughout the city, you'll find many of them effortlessly as you explore your surroundings and complete story missions. The tokens you collect trigger your accumulation of unlockables, such as costumes and comic covers.

City Events

When you need a superhero, who are you going to call? Spidey! Petty criminals and citizens in distress appear as red dots on the radar. Rush to them and set things straight. When rescuing people, take them to a safe area and set them down when their auras turn from red to green.

Combat Tours

A Combat Tour is like a string of criminal-oriented City Events. The starting point is a fist icon on your Z-Button-triggered city map. After you defeat one group of perps, a health pickup will appear and an arrow will point to the next street gang.

Race Medals

Appearing as running-man icons on your city map and spinning tokens at the start locations, races challenge you to swing, jump and run through to a series of checkpoints with the clock ticking. A bronze medal or better will count toward your completion of City Goals.

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MISSION 1 Hungry Like the Wolverine

1101

Cross the Queensboro Bridge, then swing to the Daily Bugle's roof. Your arrival will trigger a switch to controlling Eddie Brock as Venom. At the end of a Venom tutorial, you'll mix it up with Marvel madman Wolverine. If you let him rest, he'll regenerate his health. Swing your tentacles at him nonstop and toss him when he gets close.

MISSION 2 Industrial-Strength Tour

2202

Your first Combat Tour is a story mission in an industrial section of Queens near the East River. The tour consists of four fights. Beat up the baddies with a combination of kicks and punches, then tie them up with webbing. After you clear a group, an arrow will point the way to the next group, and it'll appear on your radar.

MISSION 3 One-Rhino Wrecking Crew

3214

How do you find the Rhino? Easy! Just follow the trail of destruction and the onscreen arrow. When you get to the construction site, press X to jump onto his back then beat on him. Next head for the wet cement. When he's stuck, hit him with the wrecking ball. The fight will move to a parking lot. Avoid the cars Rhino tosses and keep hitting the beast's back.

When you need to lift an object on your way to Rhino, press X near the blue dot then tap L and R until the meter arrow points to the green area.

MISSION 4 The Mutant versus the Mercs

5316

Silver Sable's Mercs will descend on Venom in a military-style mission, giving you a chance to tune up your fighting skills. You can toss Humvees and execute combo moves, but nothing beats the tentacle attack. If you're low on energy, feed on people. Bystanders will give you a better energy boost than the bad guys.

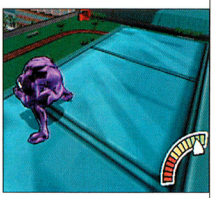
Combinations with the X and B Buttons allow you to crush enemies completely, one at a time.

MISSION 5 Ed, Edd and Venom

6328

Eddie Brock will transform into Venom and hunt down Peter Parker at the museum. Draw the beast to one end of the building's flat glass roof, hit him then run to the other end. When Venom jumps toward you, leap, hit him with an X- or B-Button bounce attack then run to the other end. Repeat the pattern until you're victorious.

If you're too close to an ailing Venom, he'll suck the life right out of you, adding to his health.



Press L and R quickly and repeatedly to bring the meter arrow to the green zone and escape.

MISSION 6 Venom and Spidey: Blood Brothers

7426

Taking a break from the web-slinging and thug-beating, you'll witness a scene in Peter Parker's basement that reveals a connection between Spider-Man and Venom. With a sample of his blood under a microscope, Peter finds traces of the Venom organism. That's why he has a splitting headache whenever he's near the beastly suit!

MISSION 7 Shock Therapy

8433

Megavolt maniac Electro is on the rampage. As Venom, you must chase him down then knock him senseless. The most difficult part of the chase is when your target flies to the top of tall buildings. If you drop to the ground Electro will be out of reach. From the top of the tallest building, drop one ledge at a time to keep close to Electro. Once in Times Square, toss cars at the bald baddie. When his energy is low he'll transform into an electricity-consuming machine. Destroy all sources of power in the area and keep targeting your enemy.

When Electro stops during your chase, keep your distance. He'll send out a damaging burst of energy.

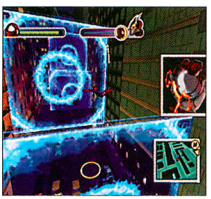
On your way down from the tallest building, stop midway then leap across a wide gap.

Knock Electro out of the air by hitting him with cars. Also destroy all electric billboards and lights.

MISSION 8 Battle of the Bugs

10 5 3 14

When the Beetle buzzes through the city, you'll give chase, starting in Queens and working your way through the tunnel to the downtown area. The flying fiend is swift and able to create force fields that will stop you midswing. You'll catch up to the Beetle at the top of a building under construction. He'll fly around two floors. Avoid his blasts, wait for him to fly by you and hit him with bounce attacks.



As you're swinging, press Y to climb over the Beetle's force fields.

After the bug glows red, he'll release a burst. Drop to avoid it.

MISSION 9 You and What Army?

12 5 4 16

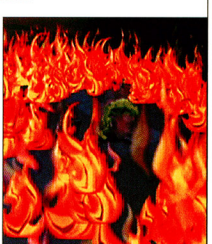
When Venom escapes Silver Sable's grasp, you'll take over, first fighting Sable, then going up against Sable's men. The battle against the Mercs will take place in four sections. As soon as you've defeated enough men to move on to the next section, an arrow will point you in the right direction. Move swiftly and gain the high ground. Feed on civilians to keep your health near the maximum level.

MISSION 10 Only You Can Prevent Goblin Fires

14 6 4 18

What's a Spider-Man game without a battle against the Green Goblin? Of course, first you'll have to catch the hulking pyromaniac. The Goblin will hop across the city in an erratic pattern, then pause to throw fireballs at you. Follow him closely while he's moving, but maintain a safe distance once he stops. When the beast gets to his destination, jump away from his fireball attacks (three single fireballs followed by two in quick succession). After he extinguishes himself temporarily, knock him over with a combination of punches and kicks. When the fight is about halfway over, it will continue in an auditorium. Keep wearing him down until he's cooked.

During your pursuit of the Goblin, save civilians while avoiding fire.

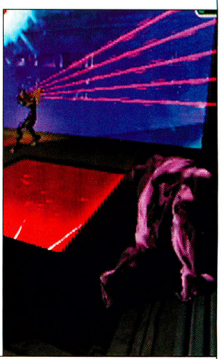


In the auditorium, the Goblin will create a ring of fire. Jump clear.

MISSION 11 Laser Tag

17 6 5 20

Venom is on the trail of the Beetle. After a short chase, you'll engage in a long warehouse battle. Jump out of the way of the creature's bombs, then whip him with your tentacles as he begins to fly around the arena or attempts to fire his blaster. When he glows red, leap away from him to avoid an energy blast. About halfway through the battle, he'll cut off all but the middle of the arena with force fields and try to coax you into laser-equipped pits. Jump over his five-pronged laser attack and hit him hard.



MISSION 12 Peter Parker Is Spider-Man

17 6 5 20

The last mission is a battle in three parts. It'll start with a rumble between the kidnapped Peter Parker and Silver Sable on the bridge. Neutralize Sable's thugs first, then go after the woman in white using bounce attacks. Stay away from the bridge's edge. You don't have webbing, so a fall will prove fatal. After you've knocked the energy out of Sable, she'll help you save citizens. Start by helping the people in the cars, then rescue the man who's hanging from a girder. After that, Venom will take Sable and you'll transform into Spider-Man. Follow the freak as he jumps around the city. When you catch up, leap over his tentacles and hit him with bounce attacks.

The next section has you fighting Carnage as Venom in a laboratory. After you whittle away the creature's health, he'll advance to another room to recover and continue running through four arenas. When you reach guards and scientists, feed on them to keep your health meter from depleting, then hit Carnage hard. Follow him closely and slap him with constant tentacle attacks, stopping only to jump when he pulls off his own bizarre attack.

Following your victory over Carnage, you'll be back in Spidey's tights, fighting Venom as he goes after villain Trask's helicopter. Get Venom's attention with a series of punches. When he moves away from the chopper, hit him with bounce attacks. He'll lash out at you, then growl. That's your cue to attack again.

When Carnage arches his back and squirms, he's about to send out all his tentacles at once. Get out of the way.

The red menace will attempt to pull you in with his tentacles. Fight back with your own extended limbs.

Stop wicked witches, evil monsters and bad hair days.

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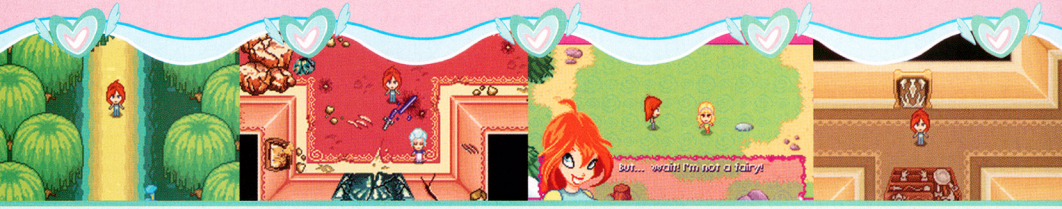

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touching is good.

METROID PRIME PINBALL

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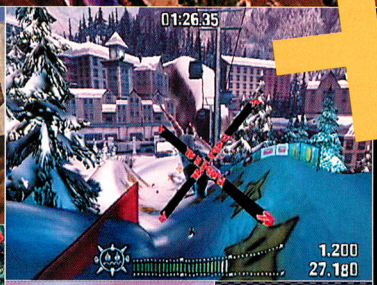
REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

If lovin' Ultimate Spider-Man's Venom is wrong, we don't want to be right.



+ SSX On Tour, Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble and much more.

115
The Hawk hits Hollywood in a return to form for the seminal extreme sports series.

109
Primed for pinball, Samus Aran hits the board rolling.

116
Nightmare Before Christmas proves to be a dream for fans of Jack Skelington.

SWINGIN'

COMIC RELIEF

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: TREYARCH
ESRB: TEEN

Though it would be hard to categorize last year's Spider-Man 2 as a misstep, the game had some rough edges, especially in its scripted battles. Treyarch and Activision's third Spider-Man title smoothes out those edges with a novel approach—or rather a comic-book-series approach—that makes it as entertaining as this season's other sandbox-superhero game, The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction. Not only does Ultimate Spider-Man follow the story of its namesake comic, but it also looks like the book, adopting Mark Bagley's stylized take on the webslinger and framing its cinematics in animated comic-book panels. The panels even slide onto the screen with a whoosh during gameplay and, for the most part, stay out of your view of the action.

Moving at breakneck speed, the story (written by Brian Michael Bendis) may be hard to follow if you're not familiar with the characters and their relationships, but you don't have to understand the subtle nuances to advance through the game and enjoy its living-comic atmosphere. Like Spider-Man 2, the game lets you roam freely through a 1/4-scale version of Manhattan, and now you can also explore Queens, where Peter Parker lives. As Spider-Man, you are free to fling your rubbery frame through the streets of the city and over its buildings, searching for timed races, hidden tokens, citizens to save and criminals to bring to justice. When you reach a quota of superhero goals achieved, a story mission pops up on the map, allowing you to advance the narrative at your own pace. Some story missions have you assuming the role of secret weapon Venom. The black-clad beast's way of moving is different from Spider-Man's—jumping great distances, rather than relying on web shots to get around—and he fights with an aggressive style that includes flinging tentacles at his opponents and sucking the life force out of unlucky bystanders. Control for both Venom and Spider-Man is responsive and fairly intuitive, considering all the varieties of fighting, climbing and jumping moves that the characters can pull off. Players new to webslinging may find the activity to be tricky at first, because the game begins in Queens where the buildings (which you must grab onto with webbing) are shorter than those of Manhattan, forcing you to stay close to the ground. Then again, it's easier to hop up and over the two- and three-story structures of Queens than to wind your way through the maze of buildings that is Manhattan.

Spider-Man 2 and the Incredible Hulk title both used currency systems, having you take on side tasks to accumulate points, then spending those points on moves and abilities. Ultimate Spider-Man ditches the currency, but your character does earn the ability to pull off more moves in sequence (four in a row, five in a row) as you advance further into the adventure. Side missions (called City Goals) allow you to practice Spidey's fighting and flinging moves, build up to story missions and unlock features such as costumes and concept art.

Some of the story sequences in the previous Spidey title were frustrating, as they seemed unfinished and untested compared to the rest of the game. The story sequences and boss battles in Ultimate Spider-Man, however, are much better-tuned. The multistage boss battles are especially exciting: enemies surprise Spidey with ever-changing techniques, and the hero retaliates with clever barbs and stinging attacks. One drawback is that you have to chase down most villains before you can fight them. Pursuing an enemy who has the means to fly (such as Electro) just seems unfair, even if you can leap buildings in a single bound while playing as Venom. If you let the enemy get too far away from you (a distance that seems completely arbitrary) the race ends in failure, leaving you to start from the beginning (or in some cases, at a checkpoint). If you don't have Spidey-like reflexes, you may have to repeat a race a couple of dozen times before you succeed. The repetition saps some of the fun out of the experience, but the cinema sequences that follow success are well worth the effort.

The number of Marvel characters who make appearances (in Ultimate form) is astounding. The most notable of them are Wolverine, Sable, Nick Fury and Johnny Storm. Some are villains, some allies. The races over the rooftops against the Human Torch are optional, which is good, because they're also among the most difficult parts of the game. In addition to being a playable character in story missions, Venom is the subject of boss battles. Once you complete the 12-mission adventure, you can roam the city freely as the evil suit with a life of its own, a bonus that adds to the game's length, as if the hundreds of collectible tokens weren't enough. The game has some seriously tricky stretches and just a few frustrations, but it's a definite upgrade from the previous Spider-Man game. As a complete package, it is simply (to use a word that goes way back with Spidey) amazing.
—GEORGE S.

Of all the cool supervillain themes out there, this guy's stuck with being a Beetle.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE REVOLUTION CONTROLLER?

The Tokyo Game Show provided a glimpse of the versatile Revolution controller. Our reviewers dish on what the controller's features will bring to gaming.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

I think the controller will allow for a fantastically creative second way to play games, but I'm not quite ready to give up on tradition just yet.

STEVEN GRIMM

Can you imagine what this means for a massive resurgence of games like House of the Dead and Samba de Amigo? All hail the new controller!

CHRIS SHEPPERD

The controller might be able to do a lot of things, but do *I* want to do those things? I dunno. So for now I'm reserving judgment on it.

ANDY MYERS

How will you play a Mario or Zelda game with this thing? I don't know the answer, but I can't wait to find out. It's going to be crazy!

GEORGE SINFIELD

As a left hander, I'm glad to see that the controller will be as simple to use for lefties as it will be for righties. It also appears to be easy to hold.

STEVE THOMASON

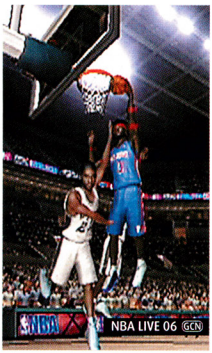
To be honest, when I first saw the controller, I was more than a little skeptical. But using it to play Metroid Prime 2 showed me the possibilities.

PETE MICHAUD

Once you wrap your head around the idea, the functional potential of this new controller is limitless. This is exactly what our industry was begging for.

SCOTT PELLAND

It provides the freedom of the DS touch screen without the limitations of a tiny screen. Huge potential.



NBA LIVE 06

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: EVERYONE

Bad AI is a staple of basketball video games. Seeing Yao Ming step out to cover Mike Bibby on the perimeter, or watching Allen Iverson pass up an open jumper and try to feed a covered Andre Iguodala in the low post? We're used to it. But beyond such antics, NBA Live 06 shows that the simple mechanics of the sport have still not matured after years in existence. Passing the ball is a nearly impossible chore—more often than not, the ball goes to an unintended target. The shooting system still doesn't make any sense—you can choose when to release the ball, but you'll make a basket pretty much only if you let go at a precise moment. Rebounding defies most accepted notions of space and matter—Earl Boykins should not be able to wait under the rim and pick up a ball that somehow bypassed Tim Duncan's outstretched arms. The clunky, scripted character motions haven't improved much in the four years of current-gen basketball games, a problem that contributes greatly to the feel of the action, particularly when trying to control players underneath the rim. NBA Live does feature the requisite wide array of modes, but several, such as the ho-hum skills contests and All-Star Weekend events, have little replay value. NBA Live needs to be rebuilt from the ground up; it's happened before, and it needs to happen again.
—CHRIS S.

ROLLING THUNDER

MORPH BRAWL

METROID PRIME PINBALL

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: FUSE GAMES
ESRB: EVERYONE

The Pinball of the Dead and Mario Pinball Land cracked open a door for ball-and-bumper games that use classic game worlds as the inspiration for tables, and enemies as pinball targets. Metroid Prime Pinball, the first of its kind for the DS, blows that door off its hinges. The handheld's dual screens accommodate pinball's vertical orientation and the initial selection of two tables (set in a pirate frigate and the Tallon Overworld) include all of the trappings that you would expect from a pinball game: flippers, ramps and clearly defined routes within which Samus Aran's Morph Ball form rolls, bounces and sets bombs. The DS even shudders, as a pinball table would, thanks to an included Rumble Pak that fits into the system's GBA game slot. As good as the game is at offering a classic pinball experience, it's even better at establishing its place in the Metroid Prime universe. The detailed tables are spot-on interpretations of Prime worlds as pinball landscapes, and enemy hordes (when triggered) spread out over the boards, causing havoc for the tumbling bounty hunter. When she's not colliding into enemies, Samus is firing at them in Combat mode from a fixed location, like a turret holding its position against increasingly powerful forces. Other events that Samus can trigger are Wall Jump mode (a minigame that results in the collection of an artifact), Phazon Multiball mode and a warp to additional tables, such as the Phendrana Drifts and the Phazon Mines. The additional tables are complete with boss battles and special items, such as missiles.

One gameplay concern is the possibility of losing sight of Samus as she rolls from one screen to the next. The timing of the transfer works so that you can keep track of her most of the time, but the gap is noticeable when several balls are on the board, or when enemies float from the top screen to the bottom screen.

Single-player options are limited to a multitable campaign and one-shot single-table missions. A multiplayer mode allows up to eight participants to compete simultaneously in the Magmoor Caverns using a DS for every player, but requiring only one game card for the whole group.

The game is a fully realized and well-tuned hybrid of pinball play and Metroid Prime atmosphere, and it sets the bar high for other pinball-action games to come.
—GEORGE S.

TOUCHINGLY VIEWTIFUL

VIEWTIFUL JOE: DOUBLE TROUBLE

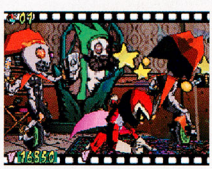
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CLOVER STUDIO
ESRB: TEEN

Viewtiful Joe was already innovative. By blending 2-D gameplay with 3-D graphics; tossing in a bright, cartoony, diorama visual style; layering on wacky characters and a bizarre sense of humor; and then kicking it up umpteen notches with unique VFX powers like slow-

motion and zoom, the gamesmiths at Capcom concocted a spectacular franchise unlike anything else. Now that it's on the DS and able to take advantage of the capabilities that touch sensitivity and dual screens afford, Viewtiful Joe is more innovative than ever; but while the action and uniqueness still impress, a few flaws prevent Joe from being all he can be.

For the most part, Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble is a lot like previous installments in the series. Despite being set in a movie studio in the real world instead of within the film world, Joe still finds a way to suit up and lay the smack down on bad guys, deftly dodging attacks and following up with a nice jab, uppercut or kick to the teeth. Joe's attacks are again made even more potent by the use of slow-mo, which sends stunned enemies careening across the



screen to clobber their unsuspecting allies. And there are still plenty of icons to collect to extend the VFX power bar, and loads of obstacles to overcome.

The puzzlelike obstacles were the real treat in previous Joe games, as they forced players to think instead of just fight—creatively using the VFX powers was essential to getting past the many traps. There are even more opportunities for players to put that brainpower to the test this time, thanks to Joe's new world-altering powers: Scratch lets you rub the screen to destroy objects or make random junk fall on your enemies; Split slides the upper half of the screen off to one side for environmental manipulation; and Slide swaps the upper and lower screens, essentially providing an updated way to zoom in on the action, which makes Joe's attacks stronger and allows for some touch-screen interaction, like hitting keypads or vanquishing certain foes. Sometimes you'll even have to use multiple powers together, like Scratching a boulder from a ledge and then using Split to make it fall into place.

However, what's cool in concept isn't quite perfect in practice. There's little problem when you're merely solving a puzzle, but when the action is hot and heavy, things get a bit rough. In a game as challenging as Double Trouble, you'll want to keep moving with your left hand and jumping or attacking with the right, and when you need to use the touch screen in the midst of

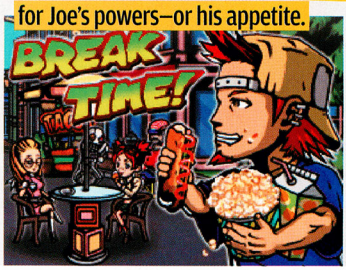
battle, you'll wish you had a third arm. The Slide move is also a bit finicky: it doesn't always kick in when you really need it to (this is especially annoying during one of the later boss fights). What I find particularly mystifying is that Slide could have been implemented easily on an unused face button, fixing the problem. Another fault is that it's occasionally hard to turn the powers off, leading to the loss of crucial VFX power and transformation back to average-Joe form. It's not as if the game isn't already challenging enough: health doesn't replenish between levels, you can acquire extra lives only by buying them (the price increases with each, too), and the amount of both is recorded at continue points, so it's possible to get backed into some pretty tough situations.

In spite of the brutal challenges, the creative levels will keep you coming back for more. Viewtiful Joe's irreverent wackiness is back in fine form—the plot involves a villain who is stealing good guys' "heroness"—and the movie-studio setting is great for parodies: *RoboCop*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Godzilla* and even *Mighty Morphin' Power*

Rangers are among the fodder. Better yet, Capcom even pokes fun at itself, with the second world being based on Resident Evil, complete with the RE music, statue puzzles and cute zombie dogs that crash through windows. Darkstalkers costumes backstage in another area are an equally amusing touch. It's too bad that the Six Machine doesn't factor in to gameplay, but the ability to play as Joe's sister, Jasmine, is a neat inclusion.

Graphically, Double Trouble looks great, providing another example of the DS's polygonal capabilities—and though there is slowdown, it's fairly minimal. The audio also is nicely done, despite the lack of full voiceover that the console Joes have had. Fortunately, Joe still yells his trademark "Henshin-A-Go-Go, Baby!" It all adds up to a game that again combines action, aesthetics and innovation like no other. Though not the flawless handheld debut for Joe I was hoping for, it still deserves a thumbs-up. —CHRIS H.

The forces of Queen Heinderella are no match for Joe's powers—or his appetite.



SNOW MOTION

RUN TO THE HILLS

SSX ON TOUR

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Once again, the SSX developers continue to push the franchise in exciting new directions without compromising quality along the way. Not all the changes in SSX On Tour are for the better, but the game still squeezes as much fun as possible from the alpine sports genre.

The largest addition in On Tour is the option to ride skis instead of just snowboards. On skis you may be able to go a little faster, and skis have slightly different turning mechanics, but they handle pretty much the same as a snowboard would when you're flying down the hill. It's cool that skiing is an option, but it would have been nice to see a more radical difference between skiing and boarding.

Along with providing a new, enormous mountain to carve up, SSX On Tour now populates the hillside with skiers and boarders. A few skiers dotting the slopes might not seem like a huge change, but it vastly improves the atmosphere of the game. And, like the rest of the mountain, they look and feel very much as you'd expect. The missions that require you to interact with them also add much-needed variety. Getting to bomb down the hill with Mario and friends is a fun addition, but I would've liked to see more variety with them, such as the opportunity to use them in career mode, as well as see them pull more unique tricks.

SSX On Tour revamps the mission mode once again, but this time it feels like it has taken a step back. SSX 3's ski-in, ski-out method of accepting challenges has been replaced with what is essentially a menu of open missions. It's clear why the developers moved away from the SSX 3 way—if you wanted to compete in a specific challenge, it was more difficult to get straight to it. But by making this change, On Tour loses some of its predecessor's realistic continuity.

Still, the mountain is connected via paths from top to bottom, so the snowboarding mentality of just strapping in and heading down a mountain is alive and well. Indeed, that's where the most fun is to be had in this game—not in races or half-pipe challenges, but in the exhilaration of a monster freestyle run. To enforce that feeling further, the new sketchbook graphic style in the menus and an awesome (and very customizable) soundtrack top off an unforgettable gameplay experience. —CHRIS S.

WORLD SERIES OF POKER

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: LEFT FIELD
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

I don't profess to be a poker pro, but I can hold my own at the local card room. And I know enough to tell that the computer players in the World Series of Poker game are unbelievably bad. They play far too many hands, don't fold when have little chance of winning, and often don't raise when they have a great chance of taking down the pot. It seems that the developers didn't bother teaching the bots the fundamentals of the game; instead they concentrated on the elements that make for good television, such as bluffing and going all-in. In the world of TV poker, that stuff is exciting. But when you're actually at the table, these plays are very frequently unsound. For those itching to mimic their favorite celebrity pros, WSOP will suffice, but for those who know and enjoy poker, this game will be a total disappointment. —CHRIS S.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Here's a tip: If you ever find yourself out on the streets fighting Spider-Man, you stand a good chance of beating the crap out of him by hitting him repeatedly with a baseball bat. At least, that's what you'll learn by playing the GBA version of Ultimate Spider-Man, a 21-level side-view action title that is long on fights against random thugs and short on superhero-on-supervillain action. While tussling with thugs, you alternate between controlling the bat-weary arachnid and bad-suit Venom. Venom appears to be a little sturdier than Spidey, and control for both characters is solid, as is typical for the Vicarious Visions/Activision Spider-Man titles. Another returning characteristic is the navigation of mazelike buildings. A map would be a useful addition, but unfortunately one is not available. The game is as good as its GBA predecessors, but it doesn't stand out in any significant way. —GEORGE S.

TEEN TITANS

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: ARTIFICIAL MIND & MOVEMENT
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

The GBA take on the excellent, hyperactive Teen Titans cartoon series has most of its moves down. The graphics look great (especially on a Micro), the soundtrack borrows the licks from the show's J-pop theme song, good voice samples are in the right places and the dialog is silly and snappy. Furthermore, the gameplay, which lets you switch between the team's five heroes at any time, utilizes each hero's unique powers nicely, from Beast Boy's high-flying bird transformation to Cyborg's manhole-obliterating ground punch. Unfortunately, the fight-and-run gameplay is very repetitive and level designs (though pretty) are sometimes monotonous. Teen Titans fans, however, will be delighted to see their fave series treated with higher-than-typical quality for a toon platformer, and they'll enjoy the 25 Biocards, which are unlocked by completing extra objectives in each mission. —STEVEN G.

QUADRUPLE-X

X-MEN OVERLOAD

X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: RAVEN SOFTWARE
DEVELOPER: ACTIVISION
ESRB: TEEN

Last year's X-Men Legends proved to fans that it takes more than great content to make a fun game. The hack-and-slash RPG crammed as much X-Men story as possible into an experience akin to Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance . . . but without the awesomeness. XLII follows the tradition with plenty of story, but its vast improvements to the game mechanics make for an enjoyable title this time around—one that does justice to the beloved source material.

The upside of the original X-men Legends installment is that it gave fans a chance to unleash mutant powers using their favorite superheroes. Who doesn't desire to summon lightning as Storm, or tear through large groups of enemies with Wolverine's claws? XLII adds even more characters and moves to the mix by teaming up the X-Men (led by Professor Xavier) with the Brotherhood (led by Magneto) to fight a common enemy: Apocalypse. The number of characters and locales in XLII is astounding—almost every corner of the X-Men world is explored.

The game's biggest improvement over the original is in its multiplayer features. Gone is the limited number of multiplayer-active levels—XLII is all four-player all the time, with easy drop-in, drop-out action.

XLII's gameplay, though drastically improved from its predecessor, falls apart in certain areas. For instance, though the new system is balanced well, its balance is sometimes a detriment: Every one of the many playable characters receives experience points, whether you use him in battle or not. It's a handy way of keeping your party members at comparable levels, but it strips a lot of the challenge that players expect from a party-based RPG. Another falter is the menu system (vital to the success of a good hack-and-slash). Although it's been redesigned for the better, keeping the game's slew of items organized becomes tedious partway through the game. Finally, some of XLII's levels are a blast and look fantastic, whereas others are unappealing and riddled with camera hang-ups.

XLII has a few bumpy spots, but it's a worthwhile game. Fans of the X-Men comics will love the attention to detail and the beautifully rendered cut-scenes, while other gamers will find a deep and satisfyingly lengthy RPG experience.
—ANDY M.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3: MUTANT NIGHTMARE

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
ESRB: EVERYONE

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles have changed over the years—their image revamped for a new millennium—but their games have stuck close to the Final Fight-style beat-'em-up formula established in their 1989 NES debut. Recent GBA titles have offered minigame breaks from the advance-battle-advance rhythm of the console games, but the first DS TMNT title is a straightforward 2-D platform fighter. You select a hero at the beginning and guide him through to the end, using his fighting style and special moves to ward off an endless supply of incidental baddies. Your Turtle can double-jump, but only when there is a platform above him—he can't hop over enemies. In special circumstances, you can use the touch screen to call on another Turtle for aid in reaching high platforms or pulling off a cooperative attack. The lower screen also displays a map of the current area. The game is a solid play, but not an advancement for Turtlekind. —GEORGE S.

SPYRO: SHADOW LEGACY

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
DEVELOPER: AMAZE
ESRB: EVERYONE

Spyro never got his due back in the day when platforming critters were a dime a dozen. His series was cuter, controlled better and had endearingly dorky humor. But when Ratchet & Clank developer Insomniac left Spyro, the dragon went into a tailspin. Does his DS debut breathe new life into the series? It does mark a departure, adding light RPG elements to the isometric-adventure style seen on the GBA. Although the game still involves much of the repetitive collecting that Spyro's fans apparently enjoy, gaining experience, leveling up and selecting what abilities to learn (like better wing travel, more physical attacks and new spells) make the going more interesting—those decisions affect where you can travel and whether you can defeat certain foes. And future DS RPGs can learn much from Shadow Legacy's touch-screen implementation, which lets the player easily thumb through menus that show stats, map details and inventory items. The game also has a sketch-based spellcasting system (draw a triangle to teleport, an equals sign to levitate stuff), which is a fun gimmick at best but a downright pain during fights. To shock foes, you need to draw a lightning bolt, but the system rejects anything but zigzag masterpieces sketched by Leonardo da Vinci. As you take your hands off Spyro's button controls to sketch the bolt—again and again—you'll leave yourself open to advancing foes. In addition, though the game has many beautiful touches (pretty backgrounds, excellent music) the core platforming is sometimes rough. You'll soar toward a certain toehold across a nicely drawn chasm only to find that the ledge is at a completely different elevation than you'd thought—an ugly way for such a well-deserving dragon to fall short. —STEVEN G.

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DISNEY'S CHICKEN LITTLE

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: AVALANCHE SOFTWARE
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

If you can look past Chicken Little's character designs—which appear to be created with the youngest youngsters in mind—you'll find a competent if unspectacular little platformer hiding beneath. The game is variety-packed, with driving, flying, old-school top-down shooting, tube-sliding, dodgeball, rhythm-based baseball and more joining the core platforming action. Mechanics such as a grappling hook and a first-person slingshot keep things interesting, and there's something new around every corner, like multiple playable characters, all taken from the movie. The game does have some rough edges, however: camera problems abound, environmental collision is iffy at times, and Chicken Little himself just feels too heavy for the tyke he is. Regardless, Chicken Little isn't a bad game at all, and fans of the film will probably gobble it up. —CHRIS H.

MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: SENSORY SWEEP
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

A 3-D fighter with sprawling, destructible environments is an ambitious project for the DS, and Marvel Nemesis, the first to give it a whirl, is superior to the recent GCN version in some ways. For one, there's much more Marvel feeling in the game: extra arenas include the Morlock tunnels from X-Men lore and the Fantastic Four's HQ, which awesomely segues into the Negative Zone. Unlockable costumes include classics like Spidey's black suit. Additionally, destructible environs let you see more of the *Daily Bugle* than merely its roof; you can brawl through its skylight down to the newsroom, where you can smash through to the copy room to reach an elevator that returns you to the roof. The game does a fair job of replicating the console version's fighting system, which relies on easy, intuitive button control rather than complex combos, and character models look good in action on the DS. The single-player experience, with its quick play and story mode, is where the fighting falls flat: the enemy AI (even when ratcheted up to the highest difficulty) sometimes feels sluggish and as stupid as a hamster telegraphing directions from the moon. You can win most fights by backing foes into a corner and punching to wear 'em down. Fortunately, the 2P battles fix that problem. Unfortunately, the title doesn't support DS Download Play, so you'll need to find other players who own the game to enjoy it at its best. More unfortunately, you'll need to completely reboot a wireless session before each fight—a major pain. The game's core fighting system also is plagued by cheap touches, such as repetitive battle grunting (Magneto sounds like he has a head cold), missing sound effects (cars hit heroes with nary a honk or a crash) and story panels that rival Bazooka Bubble Gum comics for bizarre and clunky phrasing ("With all speed get to the bridge before all is lost," says an unexplained, panicked businessman). —STEVEN G.

CUTTING, SLICING, STABBING

SERIAL THRILLER

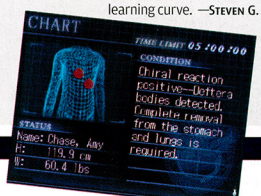
TRAUMA CENTER: UNDER THE KNIFE

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ATLUS
DEVELOPER: ATLUS
ESRB: TEEN

If a surgeon accidentally dropped WarioWare: Touched! into a patient then sewed him up, we'd likely have something like Trauma Center, a crazy game that puts a wide variety of stylus skills to work, though in a very different setting from the WarioWare games. Imagine this scenario: To get a tumor out of a stomach, you'll *dab* disinfectant on the abdomen, slit a line into the stomach, *draw* upward to fill a syringe with stabilizing medicine, *stab and hold* to inject the stomach with the fluid, peck around the organ with ultrasound, *slice* a revealed tumor, *draw* upward to suck the tumor's cytoplasm up a drain pipe, *sketch* around the deflated tumor with the scalpel, then *drag and drop* the excised tumor with forceps. And before each step, you'll stab the appropriate tool or medicine from a menu. And all within a time limit and while keeping the patient's vitals from flatlining (based on a separate countdown that you have to pump back up with injections). Sound complicated? That's only a beginner operation. If WarioWare was Touching 101, Trauma Center is Applied Touching 501. And it's extremely fun; that is, if you can stand pressure-cooker scenarios that rival the toughest bosses out there. The game does a fantastic job of introducing you to procedures by having a nurse stand by and step you through the motions. But after that she assumes that you've added it to your bag of tricks, since there are always new things to learn.

After you learn standard medical procedures at a hospital, the well-crafted drama grafts a little *X-Files* onto its *ER* plotline when you're transferred to a secret government facility. There you'll discover that medical terrorists are infecting people with bizarre critters, such as the stingray-like Kyriaki, which lacerate a patient's organs from within, and the tadpolelike Deftera, which poop out tumors. Each kind of critter demands a complex, multistage touch procedure. That's hard enough, but doing it while they're wreaking medical havoc is what makes Trauma Center into a heart-pounding juggling act. And after you're done with the main story, you can return to any operation to attempt higher rankings. That's good for replay value but even better for saving egos . . . er, lives. TC demands finely honed skills of its grade-A surgeons; we left a lot of hatchet jobs in our wake as we hacked our way up the intense learning curve. —STEVEN G.



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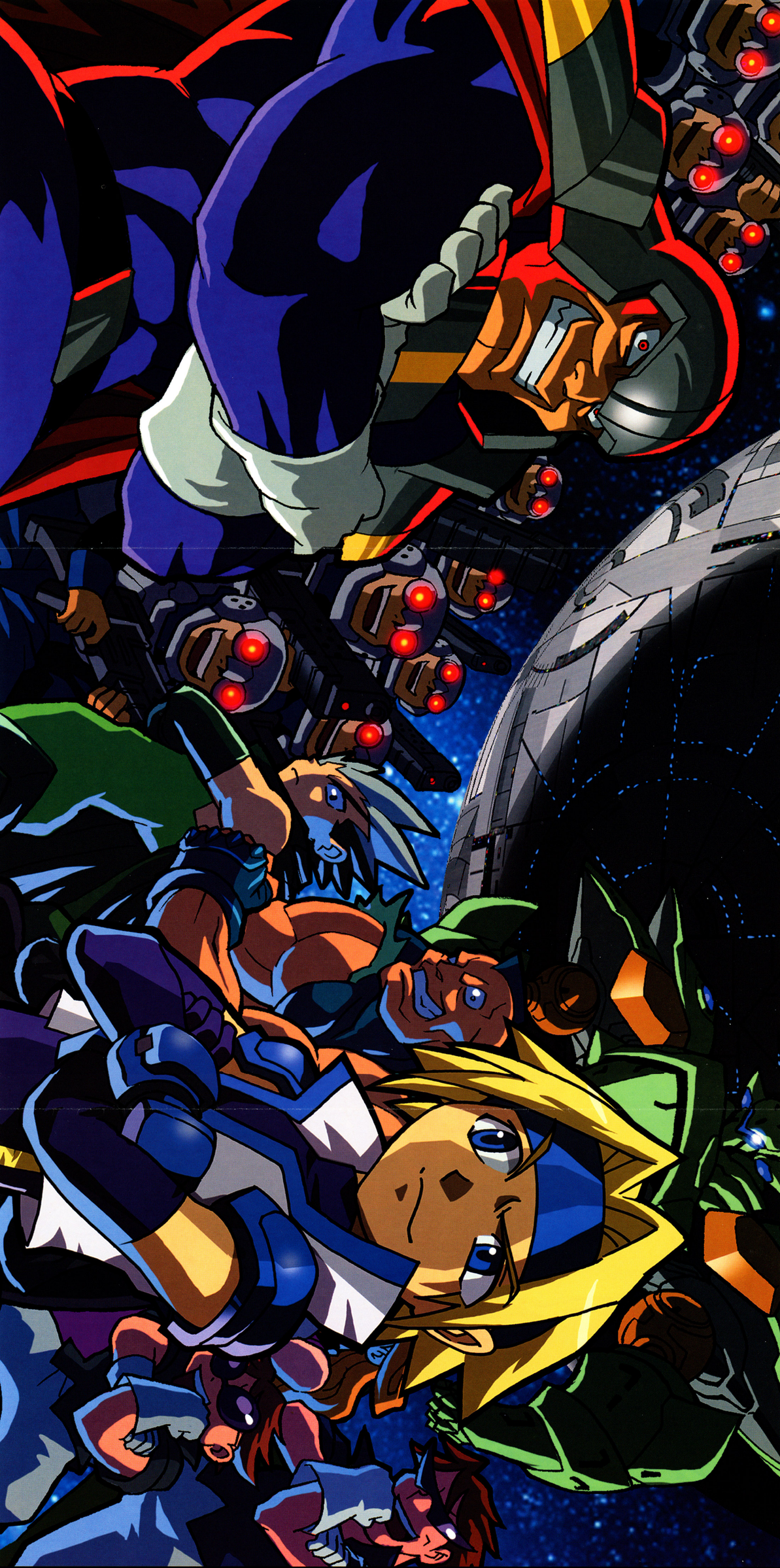

NINTENDO POWER

SEGA

GAME BOY ADVANCE

EVERYONE 10+

E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes

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LORD OF DOGTOWN

NO WASTED EFFORT

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT
ESRB: TEEN

I'll be the first to admit that the Tony Hawk's Underground games seriously rattled my faith. I'd been playing the Tony Hawk games for longer than I remember; well after I'd unlocked all of the new areas and completed all the mission objectives, I would still find new lines where I could bust huge tricks. And then came the Underground games, thrusting the now-venerable franchise into a new direction in hopes of breathing life into it. Hawk fans took the good with the bad—the addition of a story mode gave the game a much-needed backbone, but the outdated, out-of-the-box humor and minor gameplay tweaks left hard-core fans nervous about the future of the series.

Fortunately, American Wasteland puts those fears to rest. It takes what was great from the Underground games and strips out all the lame antics. Gone are the tough-to-use vehicles like the mechanical bull and other contrivances, as well as the brutal object-tossing missions. By removing these components, the renowned gameplay that put the Tony Hawk series on the map returns to the forefront. All of the classic trappings of the franchise, particularly the outstanding soundtrack and typical rebellious skater attitude, are always present but don't dominate the experience. Further, the addition of bicycles doesn't detract from the core game experience. Nearly all of the BMX missions are optional, so if two-wheeling isn't your thing, you can avoid doing it almost completely. I suggest you at least give it a shot, however—despite a rather short trick list, the bicycling is a lot of fun. It also has a completely different gameplay feel than skateboarding, so you don't feel like you're just doing the same tricks but on a bike. There doesn't seem to be any sacrifice in level design to accommodate bikes, either.

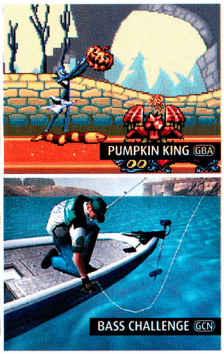
With its rich skateboarding history and unique west-coast attitude, there could not have been a better choice than Los Angeles to build a game around. L.A.'s numerous famous landmarks and sprawling landscape make it a perfect setting for skateboarding—any other city would seem not as appropriate. For those worried about a general sameness that might come from using a single city as the backdrop for an entire game, don't fret. While most of the areas are miniaturized versions of L.A. neighborhoods, the developers have taken great pains to make you want to explore every ramp, kicker and rail. It's a similar design approach to Super Mario Sunshine's—all the levels took place on a resort island, but each world was anything but the same. You can skate from one section of town to the next via connected pathways, allowing you to perform huge combo tricks, but the system also uses these transitional areas as times to load the next neighborhood, causing a choppy frame rate that can interfere with gameplay.

Similar to the Underground games, Wasteland's main story is about a newbie skater looking to make a name for himself. But unlike in the Underground series, your objectives have much stronger ties to the story, and a lasting effect on the landscape of the city. Most of the challenges require some sort of mild destruction of property, from knocking down a radio antenna to obliterating the famous Hollywood sign. Once you've accomplished the task, pieces of the various demolished landmarks end up in a place called Skater Ranch, making it a constantly evolving skate park. The impact on gameplay is incredible—you'll want to go back and check out the new addition to the Skater Ranch after every objective you complete.

The general level design feels much simpler than in recent Hawk games—the geometric grid shape of the city blocks allows for more natural routes to occur within the game, and the areas are left uncluttered by trees and the like, allowing you to visualize huge combos. It's fun again just to kick around and try new stuff—you're free to find your own lines, as opposed to feeling like you're sticking to a prearranged path in the Underground games.

As with all the Tony Hawk games, the music selection is a who's who of pop music. A mind-boggling list of tunes that span genres as well as decades fills the in-game jukebox. Wasteland has the requisite punk songs that you'd expect, but instead of always featuring the original artist, more-recent bands like The Riverboat Gamblers and Dropkick Murphys put their own twist on the genre. The mix of new and old keeps the mood in the right place, and lends a hipness that wouldn't be possible listening to the original music, which nowadays passes for oldies.

Rumor has it that many of the folks on the Wasteland development team are new to the series—Neversoft veterans responsible for earlier Hawk titles were moved over to work on the highly anticipated Gun. I'm confident that the Gun developers will perform admirably, but the first half of this move has already paid off—the fresh set of eyes on this long-running series has given it a new lease on life. —CHRIS S.



NHL 06

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

The NHL stars are back on the ice for real, and so is EA's hockey franchise. NHL 06's modes are identical to those of the 2005 iteration (save for some minor adjustments and interface improvements), but on-ice play has improved, especially in skating and puck physics. When the athletes dig into the ice, they build speed and momentum and their skates leave marks that accumulate on the ice over the period. A hard-hit puck shakes up the goalie, leaving him vulnerable to a quick follow-up wrist slap, and the puck loses speed on long passes as it skitters across the ice. Last year's off-puck control and face-off playbook are gone, but not missed. Instead, the game adds C-Stick dekeing and specialty shots. An in-goal target lets you aim your shots, but the addition has a negligible effect on whether they will go in. Overall, the game adds welcome realism without sacrificing intuitive control. —GEORGE S.

TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS: THE PUMPKIN KING

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: TOSE SOFTWARE
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

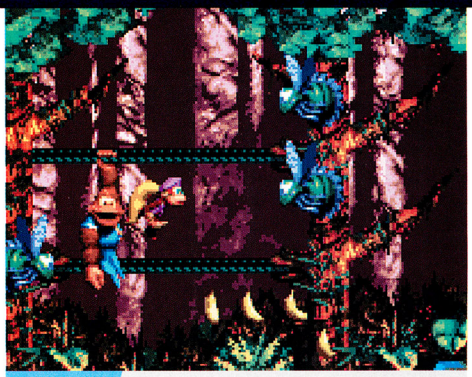
The rapidly growing fan base of Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is astonishing given that the movie came out in 1993. (My own obsession with the movie goes beyond what I would consider healthy—to the point where Jack and Sally figurines sat proudly atop my wedding cake.) A video game based on the macabre masterpiece is long overdue. The Pumpkin King serves as a prequel to the movie, following Jack on a mission to stop Oogie from overrunning Halloween Town with bugs. The movie's aesthetic (which countless other movies and video games have borrowed from) translates well to a side-scrolling environment, and Jack's lanky features make him an ideal 2-D hero. Strip away The Pumpkin King's look and feel, though, and you're left with a Castlevania-influenced platformer with only a handful of weapons and run-of-the-mill boss battles. —ANDY M.

MARK DAVIS: PRO BASS CHALLENGE

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NATSUME
DEVELOPER: SIMS CO.
ESRB: EVERYONE

Fishing requires a lot of waiting around—an attribute that doesn't make for a fun video game. Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge, like many fishing games before it, attempts to eradicate this problem by cutting out most of the dullness of the sport. In doing so, however, the game becomes repetitive and shallow. Since you revisit the same levels over and over and since the fish are always bass, the only major variables you have are temperature and weather. The fishing itself is fun, but once you learn the few tricks of the game, you'll probably lose interest. And the less-than-stellar visuals and camera problems don't help matters, either. —ANDY M.



COUNTRY CLUB

STILL MONKEYING AROUND

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 3

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: RARE
ESRB: EVERYONE

The Donkey Kong Country games were revolutionary when they came out on the Super NES years ago, but how does the third and final chapter stack up after so much time? Pretty darn well. The DKC series was known for its graphics as well as its pattern-based platforming action, and both hold up in the conversion to the GBA. The prerendered visuals look especially nice on the Game Boy micro, but conversely, there is some graininess when the game is played on a Game Boy Player.

But it's the classic platforming gameplay that's the real star, showcased as Dixie Kong and newfound cousin Kiddy Kong leap, stomp, climb, roll, spin, hover and swim through the nine Kremling-infested worlds in an attempt to rescue Diddy and Donkey Kong. Though the hop-'n'-bop mechanics are fairly traditional, the level designs shine through, even if they aren't quite on par with the first two DKC games. Fortunately, there's enough variety—whether in the form of a runaway mine cart or a transformation into one of the apes' trusty animal pals, like Enguarde the Swordfish or Squitter the Spider—to keep things consistently fun and challenging. Gamers with an old-school mentality will feel right at home memorizing the many obstacles and enemies that bar the way, and DKC3 is generous enough with the lives that anyone can have fun.

Beyond all the gameplay goodness, DKC3 also offers plenty of secrets and adventure elements, as well as all-new levels and minigames exclusive to the GBA remake, the seemingly Sonic-inspired 3-D bonus games being the best of the bunch. And while the new features might make only die-hard fans go ape, DKC3 is still rock-solid. Whether you're new to the series or returning to an old favorite, this is a country worth visiting. —CHRIS H.

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SUPER-DUPER HEROES

TREASURE INDEED

GUNSTAR SUPER HEROES

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Sega
DEVELOPER: Treasure
ESRB: Everyone 10+

Treasure fans have been waiting a long time for this game, and the venerated developer did not disappoint. Gunstar Super Heroes is the definition of action-packed. Every moment is overflowing with ordnance as you blast a seemingly endless stream of bad guys against some of the most impressive backdrops ever seen on a handheld. With its latest effort, Treasure is definitely pushing the hardware to its limits; you can almost see the smoke pouring out of your GBA. Even better, the game is brilliantly varied; each stage throws something completely different at you, never recycling the same concepts from one area to the next. And the imaginative, multi-jointed bosses are truly a sight to behold. The showdown against Seven Force, a massive robot that randomly transforms into seven different forms, deserves immediate induction in the boss-battle hall of fame.

The difficulty is also in keeping with Treasure tradition, offering even the hardest of the hard-core a formidable challenge. But although you'll kick the bucket numerous times before the credits roll, it never becomes frustrating. The difficulty curve has been honed to perfection, and finding the right pattern to conquer a particular level or boss that once seemed impossible is immensely satisfying. This type of experience is exceedingly (and tragically) rare these days, making it all the more savory.

Unfortunately, a star that burns this bright can't last long. Gunstar Super Heroes offers a reasonable play length, but you'll undoubtedly be left wanting more. The lack of a two-player co-op mode is also a shame. (The developers claim they wouldn't have been able to achieve such incredible results with two heroes on-screen at once.) Nevertheless, this is a cartridge that every GBA owner should have. It's the work of masters at the height of their craft. —Steve T.

CABELA'S OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Magic Wand Productions
ESRB: Teen

I've never actually been hunting, but I believe Cabela's latest gaming installment includes a number of outdoor activities that are beyond the realm of the typical hunting expedition—fishing, bobcat attacks . . . at one point I even went full-on GTA and hopped into a pickup truck to run down an elk (which earned me a slap on the wrist from the game warden, of course). The game's unnecessary additions, though sometimes comedic, aren't fun and can get in the way of the game's objectives. When it comes to good old-fashioned hunting, though, COA works well. The graphics and environments exceed hunting-game quality standards, as do the weapon selection and aiming options. The premise is obnoxious, but COA is surprisingly addictive. (No animals were harmed in the writing of this review.) —Andy M.

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: MARIO MIX

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Konami
ESRB: Everyone

DDR's widespread success defies logic; the rhythm-based dancing game either inspired thousands of gamers to take up dancing, or thousands of dancers to take up gaming. Whichever the case, it's easy to see why the series is so beloved. It's a simple idea coupled with fun and intuitive gameplay. So who better to wave the DDR flag than Mario?

Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix isn't just a typical DDR game with a Mario makeover. It does a good job of blending elements from Mario's universe with classic DDR gameplay. For instance, when you see a turtle scrolling up the screen in place of an arrow, you have to step on it twice; first to make it withdraw into its shell, and again to send it hurling toward your opponent—all to the beat of the music. Mario's influence is most apparent in the minigames, which will have you running from Chain Chomps, jumping on Goombas and trying to reach the highest level of a flagpole.

The game's story is ridiculous but insignificant. Like any DDR game, DDRMM is all about the songs and dance patterns. There are 29 songs to get down to, ranging from dancy versions of classic Mario tunes to dancy versions of classic Mozart tunes. The music suffers from monotony—though many of the songs are immediately recognizable, the similarities in tempo and instruments often make for pretty boring cover tunes. Whether you enjoy the soundtrack or not, DDRMM will challenge you with four difficulty levels to accommodate the skills of both newbies and DDR vets. As for the uber-hard-core DDR players . . . you guys live in another dimension, and will probably find this game to be too easy. For the rest of us, DDRMM is an enjoyable experience, and offers a form of exercise that will strengthen parts of the body other than our bulging thumb muscles. —Andy M.

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CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES
DEVELOPER: RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Crash Tag Team Racing aspires to be more than your typical cookie-cutter kart racer, and for the most part it succeeds. You'll spend a surprising amount of time on foot, collecting coins, playing minigames and hunting down unlockables in a giant amusement park. They don't make the game a full-fledged platformer by any means, but these adventure elements add some welcome variety and help create a richer experience. When you do hit the tarmac, you can "clash" with another racer to combine your karts; one competitor steers while the other mans a rear gun turret. Since the other guy is your opponent, though, deciding when to cooperate and when to part ways adds an element of strategy (and helps differentiate the mechanic from Mario Kart: Double Dash!!). CTTR also retains the series's trademark sense of humor without going overboard like other recent installments. It's not quite a return to the bandicoot's glory days (the game's not much to look at and most of the track designs are pretty uninspired), but it's a step in the right direction. —STEVE T.

THE INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: HEAVY IRON STUDIOS
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Continuing the recent trend of offering two-player drop-in, drop-out gameplay in 3-D action titles, The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer allows one player to assume the role of Frozone while the other fills the shoes of Mr. Incredible. The negatives of a single-screen multiplayer title (no player-operated camera control, a strong focus on battles against large groups of incidental enemies) are not as important as the positives of co-op camaraderie, but they do feel like a compromise if you play alone primarily. In single-player mode you can switch control between the characters (taking advantage of Frozone's freezing abilities and Mr. Incredible's super strength) and give the computer-controlled character simple instructions, but you'll do the bulk of the fighting yourself. The graphic quality (especially in the above-ground city) is a step up from that of the initial Incredibles GCN title. —GEORGE S.

TEXAS HOLD 'EM POKER DS

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: SKYWORKS
ESRB: EVERYONE

More than just Texas Hold 'Em, Majesco's entry into the DS poker library offers a total of seven variations on poker, including Omaha Hold 'Em and Five-Card Stud. Unlike Crave's World Championship Poker: Deluxe Series (released in April), this title's multiplayer connection requires a game card for each participant, which means you'll play most of your matches against AI-controlled opponents. Though you'll probably fold most of the time, as good poker strategy dictates, the AI players will often stay in, leaving you to wait out the round as the bets move slowly around the table. When you do get a decent hand, however, it won't be hard to convince the AI players to stay in and increase the pot. All of your actions are touch-controlled, making it easy to place bets (using a 10-key interface), but a menu that asks you to select a tell (to show to your opponents) before every move gets tiring quickly. —GEORGE S.

LEGO STAR WARS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: EIDOS
DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES
ESRB: EVERYONE

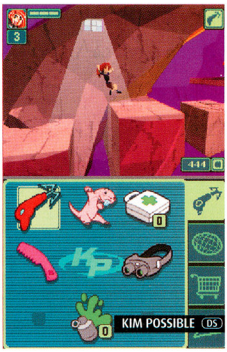
Better late than never, as they say—though in this case, I'm not so sure. Maybe that's a bit harsh, but the fact that LEGO Star Wars arrives seven months after the other console versions without any significant enhancements has curbed my enthusiasm. And the fact that it was a fairly unremarkable adventure to begin with doesn't help matters. Sure, the game boasts the incredible music and sound effects we've come to expect from all things *Star Wars*, and the LEGO theme puts a new (and occasionally humorous) spin on the franchise, but there's not much else to get excited about. The level design is mostly bland, the controls aren't as tight as they should be, and you'll spend the majority of the game hacking through mindless enemies and using The Force to solve rudimentary "puzzles." The lack of complexity when it comes to your Force powers is especially disappointing; most of the time you simply press the X Button near anything that glows, and the game will take care of the rest. It's also literally impossible to lose. Should you happen to die, you'll respawn immediately at the same point. Some cool vehicle stages help spice things up (the epic space battle from the beginning of *Episode III* is particularly impressive), but they're too infrequent to salvage an otherwise tedious tour through the prequel trilogy. With over 50 characters to unlock, as well as hidden items that you can reach only by revisiting levels with those new heroes and villains, the game does offer plenty of replay value. It also boasts a two-player co-op mode, which is always welcome. —STEVE T.

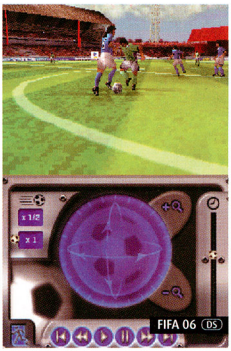
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE YELLOW AVENGER

RATING: 3.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: TANTALUS INTERACTIVE
ESRB: EVERYONE

THQ's GBA SpongeBob titles have been consistently entertaining, but the porous hero's DS debut plays like a gameplay experiment gone wrong. Though it appears to be a 3-D platformer at first glance, you're limited to moving on 2-D paths with the option to change your course at junctions. A map on the lower screen attempts to show how the locations are connected, but it's so ambiguous, it's of little use. As you run and jump over the occassional gap, you'll fight off the spawn of The Dirty Bubble, but enemies are so few and far between, you'll be lulled to sleep waiting for the next fight. The story, which has SpongeBob taking over for the retired Mermaidman, deserves more action than this watered-down adventure can provide. —GEORGE S.





ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISION
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Like its console counterpart, Ultimate Spider-Man for the DS allows you to play as both the beloved wall-crawler and his arch nemesis Venom. You'll alternate between the two characters over the course of the story (written by legendary comic scribe Brian Michael Bendis), and each plays quite differently. Whereas Spidey's controls consist of a standard Control Pad and button interface, Venom takes full advantage of the touch screen. You'll use the stylus to manipulate the villain's tendrils, grabbing onto objects and hurling them to and fro. It's a clever use of the DS's unique functionality, but the execution could be tighter. The hit detection sometimes feels a bit off, and taking down bosses is usually much easier if you just use the buttons (you can revert to a traditional button-oriented control scheme on the fly). Spider-Man also utilizes the touch screen from time to time to open doors, disable security systems, etc. The corresponding mechanics are pretty lame, though, and switching between the buttons and touch screen in the heat of battle can be a real pain. My other big problem with the Spidey stages is that you have to hurry from one objective to the next; if you don't get to one in time, the level starts over from the beginning. It's never exceedingly difficult, but it seems like an artificial way to extend the game's brief playtime (you can finish it in about five hours).

On the bright side, the cel-shaded visuals are clean and attractive, making Ultimate Spider-Man one of the best-looking 3-D games on the handheld. I also love the comic-book-style cut-scenes, which are accompanied by quite a bit of quality voice acting. True believers will probably enjoy Spidey's latest adventure despite its shortcomings, but like the Venom suit, the game is ultimately a noble experiment that fails to achieve its full potential. —STEVE T.

DISNEY'S KIM POSSIBLE: KIMMUNICATOR

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: A2M
ESRB: EVERYONE

To be honest, when I picked up Kim Possible for DS, I was expecting to see more of the same; more of the same GBA-style graphics, more of the same gameplay elements and more of the same old, same old. I was flat-out wrong. With a mix of 2-D and 3-D, Kim has some of the coolest-looking levels of any DS game yet. It also makes ample use of the touch screen with a buy-on-the-fly menu for purchasing power-ups in the middle of the action. The game goes wrong, however, in the hit-detection department. Kim will jump toward ledges that you should easily be able to hang on to, instead you'll glance off of them and fall two platforms down, forcing you to retrace your steps—only for it to happen again and again. KP takes roughly four hours to complete (I'm being generous), although it could be stretched a little further if you enjoy collecting all of her different outfits—which you can change on the fly (but who cares?) Kimmunicator is more than I'd expect from a game designed for tween girls, but it's not enough to please hardcore gamers. —PETE M.

FIFA 06

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: EVERYONE

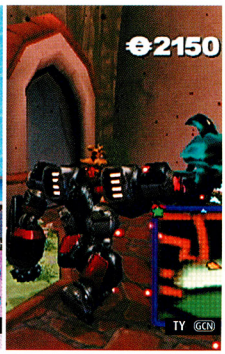
As much as I love American football, there's a lot to be said for the free-flowing action of soccer. EA captures the shifting dynamics of the world's favorite sport in FIFA 06 for Game Boy Advance. You'll run into choppy graphics on occasion, and switching players doesn't work as smoothly as I'd like it to, but given the limitations of the handheld, the overall action is very solid and realistic. Unlike the DS version of the game, you can't create custom teams and players. Instead, when you enter Career mode you'll choose a favorite club (almost every major soccer franchise in the world is included) and manage it for five years. Scenario challenges, seasons and tournaments are also available, as is a multiplayer link option. Even the sound is well above the gravelly standard for GBA, although you'll miss the excellent commentary available in the DS and GCN versions. If you don't have a DS, this game is a sweet alternative. —SCOTT P.

FIFA 06

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: EVERYONE

Once again, EA has built a superior soccer simulation, stuffed it with clubs from around the globe, added cool bells and whistles and dubbed it FIFA. Like its many predecessors, FIFA 06 offers precise passing, defending, tackling and scoring controls, but you'll have to learn functions for almost every button on the DS to get the most out of your game. Demanding even more of players are the tiny touch-screen buttons used for activating attack and defense formations; they're simply too small and awkwardly placed to be useful. Equally useless is the overhead view of the pitch on the bottom screen. In contrast, although the players depicted on the top screen are on the small side, the 3-D animation is smooth and realistic. And the level of detail when you zoom in during replays is astounding. Don't expect a ton of replay moments, however, unless you're a lousy defender, because even on the lowest of four difficulty levels your computer opponent won't allow you to score easy goals. The game's management features are extensive, from creating players and teams to playing a five-year Career mode with special challenges for each season. The touch-screen may be a bust for controlling the action on the pitch, but it's awesome for painting custom team crests. Other notables include a surprisingly good voice commentary, a Challenge mode full of historical scenarios, more than 20 tournaments, a two-player single-card mode, a four-player multicard mode and a demo you can send to a friend. I'm no hooligan, but I'd fight to the front of the line for this one. And maybe next year EA will do right by the touch screen. —SCOTT P.



ZATCH BELL!: MAMODO BATTLES

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: 8ING
ESRB: TEEN

The concept is unusual—puppetlike aliens come to earth to enlist the help of human partners in a once-in-a-millennium battle for the Mamodo crown—but Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles ultimately shows itself as little more than a run-of-the-mill fighter. Button-mashing will get you far into the game's story mode, in which you guide one of four aliens through a series of fights; the alien uses physical attacks, and its partner initiates spells. As you advance, you have some say in the order of the battles, but you ultimately have to win every one to move on. You can also pump up your fighters' stats in three categories by using points that you earn by exploring locations. All told, the game features 14 areas and 14 alien/human pairs, some of which meld together to create bizarre forms. The game looks great, but it's shallower than fighter fans might hope for. —GEORGE S.

DUEL MASTERS: SHADOW OF THE CODE

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ATARI
DEVELOPER: MISTIC SOFTWARE
ESRB: EVERYONE

Though Shadow of the Code does little to advance the Duel Masters trading-card-game series past the established formula of card collection and friendly competition, it does offer an update for players who are keeping up with the latest expansion-pack sets. By incorporating cards from the Survivors of the Megapocalypse set and the Thunder Charge of Ultra Destruction set, the game goes past its predecessors by putting Survivor Creatures, Speed Attackers and other recent Duel Masters additions into the mix. For those new to Duel Masters, the story mode starts with a tutorial (unlike the Yu-Gi-Oh! card titles) and a series of introductory matches, but the difficulty ramps up faster than it did in the first two games of the series. A pocket gizmo offers minor card-management improvements and new minigames, but the changes don't justify the purchase for casual Duel Masters fans. —GEORGE S.

DRIV3R

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ATARI
DEVELOPER: FERNANDO VELEZ / GUILLAUME DUBAIL
ESRB: TEEN

The team that developed V-Rally 3 for the Game Boy Advance takes on the ambitious 3-D driving-and-shooting Driver franchise with the tale of doomed cop Tanner and his efforts to take down a crime syndicate. The game runs at a good frame rate, but the clipping is horrendous at times—whole buildings pop into your view as you get close to them. Missions alternate from on-foot gun battles to driving exercises, the most successful of them being all-out car chases. It's frustrating to fail your mission just because you've fallen behind the vehicle you're pursuing, but it's satisfying when you can get into a groove and keep up with the vehicle while dodging moving obstacles. The story is well-told, but the still-shot cinematics don't look like they belong with the rest of the game. —GEORGE S.

DIG DUG DIGGING STRIKE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NAMCO
DEVELOPER: NAMCO
ESRB: EVERYONE

Like the classic? Love crazy game design? Then you'll think DDDS is a Dig Dug Disneyland. The dual-screen concept alone is dizzy fun: You'll start on the upper screen, where you'll share a 3-D island with a roaming boss, plus many gigantic stakes that stick out of the ground. To defeat the boss, you'll need to drown it by cracking off the island chunk the boss is crossing. You start by driving the stakes into the earth like a wedge. To do that, you'll leap into holes to enter the bottom screen's 2-D underground realm based on the classic arcade dynamic, where you'll need to destabilize the depths under the stakes until the isle chunk cracks off. (You'll want to ensure that you're on the safe side of the wedge). That's crazy enough, but it's truly nuts when DDDS starts making you think about the action on both screens—the boss has its own methods of finishing you off from above, and you'll be able to sabotage it by flying in helicopters and using other weapons. The 2-D gameplay riffs on Dig Dug basics in dozens of ways never seen before. Environments now include slippery ice caves and submerged ruins. Fresh obstacles make tunnel travel hazardous in great new ways: magma spews down holes, bombs obliterate mass areas, and paralyzing sludge drools downward; and many new creatures, like speedy worms and geckos with superlong tongues, keep the experience constantly surprising. Though playing through the main story doesn't take nearly as long as I'd like, level replays plus a two-player sabotage mode (two DS cards needed) lengthen the gameplay. —STEVEN G.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER: NIGHT OF THE QUINKAN

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: KROME STUDIOS
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

From the Outback to the Nintendo GameCube, Ty the Tasmanian Tiger returns once again, a little older, a little spookier and with more-focused gameplay that makes Night of the Quinkan more enjoyable than the previous installment. The modern platformer formula applies here, with a nice variety of tasks—kart races, battle arenas, flying missions, mech combat and demolition derbies—mixed in with the predictable jumping, swimming and enemy-bashing. The action is decent fun, and has additional depth thanks to lots of power-up gems that grant Ty's boomerangs new powers, but the controls aren't quite tight enough for a game of this ilk. The collision animations could also use some work, as could the auto-targeting in the Crabmersible vehicle. As a budget-priced title, however, Ty delivers satisfactory entertainment for platformer fans. —CHRIS H.

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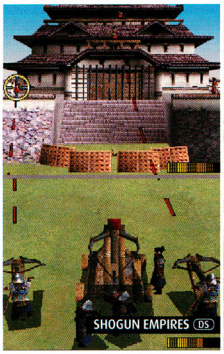
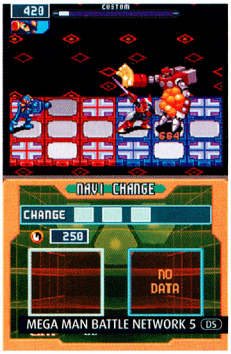




REAL TIME CONFLICT: SHOGUN EMPIRES

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NAMCO
DEVELOPER: BOX CLEVER INTERACTIVE
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Part feudal-era Risk, part real-time strategy, Shogun Empires uses the DS's dual screens and touch-screen capabilities to let you manage a large-scale war and participate in small battles at the same time. You lead a shogun army with the goal of spreading your rule over the territories of an ancient map—use the stylus to select groups of allied warriors and send them into battle. They'll automatically fight all enemies they come in contact with, either wiping out the opponents or being wiped out in the process. The battles are fast, but unremarkable due to rudimentary animation. Also rough around the edges is a series of midbattle minigames that have you firing catapults at a castle, chasing warriors on horseback and engaging in additional action-oriented activities. Though the game shines in strategy play, it lacks luster when the focus is on individual events. —GEORGE S.

MEGA MAN ZERO 4

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: INTI CREATES
ESRB: EVERYONE

The fourth installment of the Mega Man Zero series follows directly in the footsteps of its predecessors, and that, most definitely, is a good thing. Once again, legendary Maverick Hunter Zero finds himself entwined in the conflict between humans and Reploids, thrust into highly detailed, highly challenging horizontally and vertically scrolling 2-D stages, cutting down robotic legions and their slickly designed animal-inspired masters to avert impending Armageddon. As usual, the action is intense and the control is incredibly crisp; if you fall prey to one of the many instant-death traps, you have nothing to blame but your own skill. And while much of MMZ4 is familiar, new touches have been added; in addition to his trusty Buster Shot cannon and ever-satisfying Z Saber, Zero now augments his arsenal with the new Zero Knuckle—a weapon that instantly steals abilities from enemy grunts, allowing for even more firepower and strategic combat possibilities. An item-creation feature, a refined Cyber-Elf system that's much more user-friendly, and a weather system also give the player an optional edge. All of these choices can make the game notably easier than previous Zero titles and alleviate a lot of frustration, but taking the easy way out will prevent you from obtaining the EX Skills from the bosses. There's also an Easy mode, but if you want to feel a sense of accomplishment, you'll need to stick to Normal and play with the pure skill required by the rest of the series. Now more accessible than ever, Mega Man Zero 4 is another great chapter in Capcom's renowned franchise. —CHRIS H.

MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK 5: DOUBLE TEAM DS

RATING: 7.0

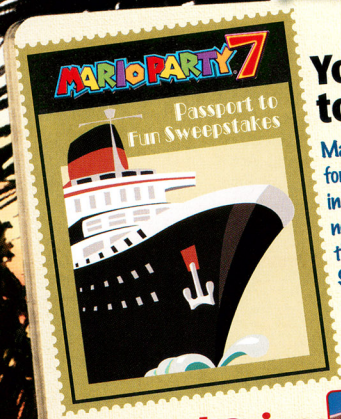
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
ESRB: EVERYONE

There have been complaints that the Mega Man Battle Network series doesn't change much from one version to the next, and while that holds especially true in Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS, the franchise's first venture onto the system enhances the already solid gameplay. As the title suggests, Double Team is essentially the same as the MMBN5 pair that came to Game Boy Advance in June, only with both versions of the GBA game (Team Protoman and Team Colonel) selectable from the outset and with a few DS-exclusive features. One major addition is the ability to bring partner Navis into battle with Mega Man. The Navis can be tagged in for actual fighting or used for support, making combat a bit more interesting. Another (much-appreciated) supplement is the inclusion of a map on the upper screen (once you find an area's map data), which relieves some of the tedium of the mazelike level design. You also have the power to import characters from one version to the other, but only once you've completed one version of the game. And super-hardcore fans can upload their chip data from the GBA versions of MMBN5. In most other regards, though, this is the same Battle Network as before, with a decent mix of strategic, real-time battles, RPG-like exploration, and lots of character-customization options. The game is given further depth thanks to the recently introduced liberation missions. It's too bad some of the translation woes of the GBA version weren't corrected for the DS, but Double Team is nonetheless the Battle Network game to get. —CHRIS H.

ALSO THIS MONTH

THQ's talk-and-shop adventure **Bratz: Rock Angelz** (GCN and GBA) has the pre-teen sensations dealing with life in the burbs. . . . Bilingual adventurer Dora and monkey Boots blast off for muchos thrills in **Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet** (GCN) from Global Star Software. . . . Global Star's **Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.** (GCN) is 3-D platforming with Rainbow Monkeys and zany villains, such as Gramma Stuffum. . . . Jimmy Neutron leads a cast of Nicktoons heroes in a 15-level battle to stop the Evil Syndicate from doing something really bad in THQ's **Nicktoons: Unite!** (GCN, GBA and DS). . . . Atari's **Backyard Skateboarding** (GBA) is like THUG for kids. Only instead of pulling practical jokes on people, you help them with their chores. . . . **Atomic Betty** (GBA) from Namco follows the adventures of Betty and her pals Noah and Paloma as they cooperate à la The Lost Vikings to clear switch-and-platform-filled environments. . . . In Buena Vista's **Chicken Little** (GBA) chickens don't fly, but the hero does hop onto platforms, attack enemies with a yo-yo and play dodgeball. . . . Chickens do fly, and you shoot them, in DSi's **Chicken Shoot** (GBA). . . . If you're collecting everCons while exploring everView, you must be playing THQ's **everGirl** (GBA) . . . . Twelve duos have at it in Bandai's fighter **Zatch Bell! Electric Arena** (GBA). Kooky minigames offer a break from the alien-slamming action. . . . Hardcore Bionicle fans will enjoy a return to the island of Mata Nui for **Bionicle: Maze of Shadows** (GBA) from THQ. . . . Your classic '94 Escort wagon is not in DSi's **Ford Racing 3** (DS), but the game does include touch-controlled steering and a helpful lower-screen map. . . . Several great compilations of arcade classics have surfaced in the last year. **Ultimate Arcade Games** (GBA) from Telegames is not one of them.

MARIO PARTY® 7



Your Passport to Fun!

Mario and his friends have set sail for exotic ports and hilarious action in Mario Party 7. And now the winner of the Passport to Fun Sweepstakes can go on a dream vacation, too!

Grand Prize:

One Winner

One party animal will win the ultimate cruise for four (see official sweepstakes rules for more details). Consider it your passport to good times. So don't just dream about it—go online and enter to win!

2nd Prize: One Winner

You don't need to win a cruise to have a good time. You can camp out at home with our Passport to Fun Party Pack, which includes a Nintendo GameCube, a Mario Party 7 game, four controllers and other goodies. (Friends for the multiplayer mode not included.)

3rd Prize: Seven Winners

Just as there are seven seas and seven Mario Party games, there will be seven lucky winners who score a copy of Mario Party 7 for Nintendo GameCube. Do you feel lucky?

To Enter: Visit **www.marioparty.com** and complete your entry today. While you're online, be sure to check out all the festivities, not to mention minigames, downloads, postcards and more.

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Mario Party 7 Passport to Fun: Abbreviated Sweepstakes Rules

1. Sponsor - Nintendo of America Inc., 4820 150th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98052
2. Eligibility - Open to U.S. Residents, including Washington D.C., excluding Puerto Rico, of all ages. Winners under the legal age of the majority in their state ("Minor"), must be accompanied by someone 25 years of age or older on the cruise. Prizes won by Minors will be awarded to their parents or legal guardians.
3. Enter online at http://www.marioparty.com
4. Entries must be received by 11:59 PM Pacific time on December 7, 2005
5. Grand Prize—Cruise package (including airfare or ground transportation as applicable, transportation, and a four-day, three-night cruise for four (4) people including winner); Approximate Retail Value (ARV) $4720.00. First Prize—Mario Party Passport to Fun Party Pack; (ARV) $345.12. Second Prize—a copy of Mario Party 7; (ARV) $49.99.
6. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Many will enter, a total of nine (9) will win.
7. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY
8. Potential winners must return an affidavit of eligibility to Sponsor prior to receiving a prize.
9. Sweepstakes subject to official rules and regulations. To view official rules, please go to www.marioparty.com.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Comic Mischief

[ARCHIVE]

MIDAS TOUCH

We're entering the golden age of the Nintendo DS, and several new entries to the archive are at the forefront. Trace Memory, Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow and Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney prove that the sky is the limit for unusual and creative concepts on the two-screen portable.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	THQ	186	E
Alien Hominid	6.5	O-3	187	T
Animaniacs: The Great Edgar Hunt	3.0	Ignition	190	E
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	9.0	Namco	187	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	4.5	Activision	189	T
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	7.0	Activision	187	T
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Def Jam: Fight for NY	7.5	Electronic Arts	186	M
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	9.0	Nintendo	191	E 10+
Donkey Konga 2	7.5	Nintendo	192	T
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	5.0	Atari	188	T
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas	5.5	Atari	192	T
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	8.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
FIFA Street	6.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
Fight Night: Round 2	8.0	Electronic Arts	191	T
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	5.5	Electronic Arts	188	T
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	VU Games	196	T
The Incredibles	7.0	THQ	186	T
Intellivision Lives!	3.0	Crave	187	E
International Golf and Tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
King Arthur	4.5	Konami	187	T
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	7.0	Activision	188	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	6.5	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E 10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 6	7.5	Nintendo	188	E
Mario Power Tennis	7.0	Nintendo	187	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
MC Groovz: Dancecraze	5.0	Mad Catz	189	E
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X: Command Mission	6.5	Capcom	186	E
Metroid Prime 2 Echoes	9.5	Nintendo	187	T
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	7.5	Midway	188	M
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Mortal Kombat: Deception	7.5	Midway	191	M
MVP Baseball 2005	9.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
NBA Live 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
NBA Street V3	7.5	Electronic Arts	190	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
NFL Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	189	E
NHL 2005	7.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door	9.0	Nintendo	186	E
Pinball Hall of Fame	4.5	Crave	189	E
The Polar Express	5.0	THQ	187	E
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	5.0	THQ	186	E
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	9.0	Ubisoft	188	M
Rave Master	5.0	Konami	192	T
Resident Evil 4	10.0	Capcom	189	M
Robots	5.0	VU Games	190	E
Scaler	6.5	Global Star	188	E
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	7.0	THQ	186	E
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	5.5	VU Games	187	E
Star Fox: Assault	8.0	Nintendo	189	T
Strike Force Bowling	4.5	Crave	190	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	8.0	THQ	186	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Melee	3.0	Konami	192	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	4.0	Konami	186	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	8.5	Electronic Arts	191	M
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2	4.5	Ubisoft	192	T
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	192	M
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	7.5	Activision	186	T
Trigger Man	1.0	Crave	186	T
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	5.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Viewtiful Joe 2	9.0	Capcom	187	T
Virtua Quest	5.5	Sega	189	T
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends	8.0	Activision	186	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Asphalt Urban GT	6.5	Ubisoft	188	E
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
Feel the Magic: XY/XX	9.0	Sega	188	T
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Madden NFL 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	7.0	Namco	188	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	193	E
Nintendogs	8.5	Nintendo	196	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Pac-Pix	8.0	Namco	192	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Ping Pals	5.0	THQ	188	E
Pokémon Dash	5.0	Nintendo	191	E
Polarium	7.5	Nintendo	192	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E
Rayman DS	6.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Retro Atari Classics	5.0	Atari	191	E
Ridge Racer DS	7.0	Namco	188	E
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
Spider-Man 2	6.5	Activision	188	E
Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
Sprung	7.5	Ubisoft	188	T
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Super Mario 64 DS	8.5	Nintendo	188	E

REVIEWER NOTES

REBELSTAR: TACTICAL COMMAND

Though rough around the edges, and maybe too ambitious for the Game Boy Advance, Rebelstar debuts an intense turn-based tactics system on the GBA that factors in sightlines. If you can't see it, you can't shoot it. Walls in the way? Create a window with explosives. Need to obscure your foe's vision? Throw a smoke grenade. It makes tactics strategy more realistic but probably too management-intensive for anyone but the genre's most devoted maniacs. —Steven G.

>PINBALL OF THE DEAD

This gem never quite got the credit it deserved. POTD is easily the best video pinball game on the GBA to date, while its graphics and gameplay paved the way for Metroid Prime Pinball.

—Andy M.

CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW

Chris S. is rarely right, but I'd like to reinforce what he said in his review last month: Dawn of Sorrow is positively brilliant. It's the most beautiful game I've ever seen on a handheld and it controls like a dream. There are tons of great DS games coming out this fall, but Castlevania should be at the top of your list.

—Steve T.

>MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 3

I'm a pretty big fan of all those Midway racing games from back in the day, so I was pumped to see Arcade Treasures 3. For fans of these titles, it doesn't disappoint. Iron Man Ivan Stewart, you're my hero.

—Chris S.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.0	Electronic Arts	188	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
WarioWare: Touched!	9.0	Nintendo	190	E
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
World Championship Poker: Deluxe Series	5.0	Crave	192	E
Yoshi Touch & Go	7.0	Nintendo	191	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Keeper	4.5	Ignition	189	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Ace Combat Advance	4.0	Namco	190	E
Animaniacs: Lights! Camera! Action!	4.5	Ignition	190	E
Backyard Basketball	4.5	Atari	186	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Banjo Pilot	7.0	THQ	189	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	VU Games	197	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
The Berenstain Bears and The Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	2.0	Activision	188	T
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Classic NES Series Castlevania	8.5	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Dr. Mario	7.0	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Metroid	8.0	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Zelda II: The Adventure of Link	7.0	Nintendo	186	E
Codename Kids Next Door—Operation S.O.D.A.	4.5	Global Star	187	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Crushed Baseball	2.5	Summitsoft	186	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
Dead to Rights	5.0	Destination	187	T
Disney's Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Disney's Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Donkey Kong Country 2	6.5	Nintendo	187	E
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Duel Masters: Kaijudo Showdown	4.0	Atari	187	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E 10+
Elf	2.0	Crave	187	E
F/A 18F: Super Hornet	3.5	Majesco	188	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.0	THQ	186	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E 10+
Fear Factor Unleashed	3.0	Hip Interactive	187	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	7.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	8.5	Square Enix	187	E
Finding Nemo: The Continuing Adventures	3.5	THQ	186	E
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0	Nintendo	193	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Golden Nugget Casino	2.0	Majesco	188	E
Grand Theft Auto Advance	7.5	Rockstar	186	M
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gundam Seed: Battle Assault	5.0	Bandai	186	T
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	6.0	THQ	188	E
Hugo: The Evil Mirror	3.0	Namco	192	E
The Incredibles	6.0	THQ	186	E
It's Mr. Pants	6.5	THQ	187	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Killer 3-D Pool	4.0	Destination	192	E
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	7.5	Square Enix	188	E
Kirby & The Amazing Mirror	8.0	Nintendo	186	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament	8.5	Namco	190	E
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap	9.5	Nintendo	189	E

>DK: KING OF SWING

No jumping, all swinging makes one heck of an interesting platformer. Using only the GBA's L and R Buttons, that's just plain nuts. And really fun for gamers who like a fresh challenge.

—Steven G.

PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY

If I'd been told a few months ago that I'd absolutely love a lawyer game, I'd have called for an insanity plea, but then along came Phoenix Wright. Capcom has localized this game almost perfectly, providing an absorbing graphic-text adventure filled with ample opportunities to laugh. The voice-recognition option is great, too; you don't *need* to yell "Objection!" into the microphone, but why wouldn't you?

—Chris H.

>TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

The great golfing franchise's swing at realism retires the putting aids that appeared in previous versions, but new dance-floor dynamics make it almost as easy to put the ball in the hole.

—George S.

FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES

With Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance finally upon us, how easily we forget the recent FE masterpiece for GBA. The Sacred Stones did much for the series with its looser style of mission progression (similar to Final Fantasy Tactics Advance) and branching storyline. FESS also has the most versatile class-changing system in any FE game (including Path of Radiance), giving players more control over how their units level up. It is a truly massive strategy game.

—Andy M.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
LEGO Knights' Kingdom	5.0	THQ	187	E
LEGO *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	192	E
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	6.0	Activision	186	E
Lizzie McGuire 2	3.5	Buena Vista	186	E
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	8.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Mario Party Advance	6.0	Nintendo	191	E
Mario Pinball Land	7.5	Nintendo	186	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 3	7.5	Capcom	186	E
Metal Slug Advance	8.5	SNK	188	T
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Monopoly	5.0	Destination	188	E
Monster Trucks	3.5	Majesco	189	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	5.0	Electronic Arts	187	E
Nicktoons: Freeze Frame Frenzy	4.5	THQ	186	E
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World	6.0	Destination	188	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Pokémon Emerald	6.5	Nintendo	192	E
The Polar Express	5.5	THQ	187	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	4.0	THQ	186	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
Racing Gears Advance	7.5	Orbital Media	189	E
Rapala Pro Fishing	3.5	Activision	186	E
Rayman: Hoodlum's Revenge	5.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Rugrats: All Grown Up! —Express Yourself	4.0	THQ	186	E
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
SD Gundam Force	5.5	Bandai	186	E
Shaman King: Legacy of the Spirits—Soaring Hawk / Sprinting Wolf	3.5	Konami	191	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E 10+
Shrek 2: Beg For Mercy	4.5	Activision	188	E
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
Smashing Drive	4.5	Destination	188	E
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	5.0	THQ	186	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Strawberry Shortcake: Summertime Adventure	3.0	Majesco	189	E
Super Army War	6.5	Atlus	190	T
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	6.0	Konami	186	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	3.0	Majesco	188	E
That's So Raven	2.0	Buena Vista	186	E
Thunderbirds	3.0	VU Games	186	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	6.5	Activision	186	E
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	4.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
World Championship Poker	3.5	Crave	188	E
WWE Survivor Series	3.0	THQ	187	T
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Destiny Board Traveler	2.5	Konami	188	E
Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics	3.0	Atari	187	E
Zoo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

Photos by Joe Fatooni

EVENTS

Detroit Rock City

The city known for cars, hockey and Motown gets rocked by Fall Out Boy and Nintendo on opening weekend of the Nintendo Fusion Tour.

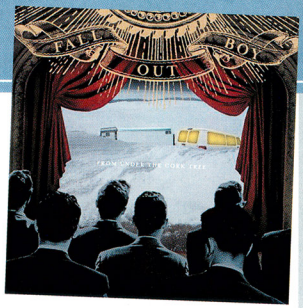
Earlier this year, Fall Out Boy was just a blip on the music-industry radar. Since the May release of *From Under the Cork Tree* (the band's major-label debut), however, the Chicago-based band has catapulted into the limelight, earning a number-one video on *TRL* with the single "Sugar We're Goin Down" and enormous commercial success. As their new album continues to sell rapidly (it went platinum just before this issue went to print), Fall Out Boy are keeping busy on a two-month Nintendo-sponsored tour across the US, joined by friends The Starting Line, Motion City Soundtrack, Boys Night Out and Panic! at the Disco. We visited Detroit, Michigan to check out the tour's sold-out kickoff show at the historic State Theater and to spend some time with members of Fall Out Boy to learn what they're all about.

From Under the Cork Tree begins with a song titled "Our Lawyer Made Us Change the Name of This Song So We Wouldn't Get Sued," in which singer Patrick Stump pleads with listeners to not listen to the remainder of the album. Fall Out Boy's fearless leader, lyricist and bassist Pete Wentz, is being mostly facetious with the song—but he's also setting the tone for an album full of painfully honest poems mixed with playful '80s pop-culture references. (Trohman has a tattoo on his arm that reads, The Queen Is Dead and another on his stomach displaying the words Viva Hate. Both of Trohman's tattoos are references to pop legend Morrissey.) "I think that part of it is nostalgia, and part of it is inside jokes," says Wentz, referring to songs like "Nobody Puts Baby in the Corner" (a reference from the '80s movie *Dirty Dancing*), which, oddly enough, is a song about his own jealousy and failures. "They're lyrics that, as a band, we can all relate to," says guitarist Joe Trohman about Wentz's lyrics. In response to the album's unorthodox references, Trohman admits, "We're really nerdy guys. We're really into comics, really into *Star Wars*, things like that." Wentz proudly wears a *The Nightmare before Christmas*-themed tattoo sleeve on his right arm.

But Fall Out Boy's individual obsessions go beyond comics, *Star Wars*, Morrissey and *The Nightmare before Christmas*. All four band members are also gamers, making Fall Out Boy and the Nintendo Fusion Tour a perfect match. Each member of the band has his own taste in games (Trohman is currently playing Resident Evil 4, while drummer Andy Hurley is working on The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction and Killer 7), but all of them have an undying love for the classics. "We're all stuck back in the '80s," Trohman admits. "One of my favorite games of all time is the first Final Fantasy, which I still have." Hurley, however, is more the Final Fantasy II type ("The Japanese [Final Fantasy] IV," he points out), and also claims to own the first 50 issues of Nintendo Power. Wentz remembers calling the Nintendo hotline when trying to reach the Minus World in Super Mario Bros., and Stump asks, "What happened to Blaster Master and Kid Icarus?" (See our sidebar for the answers.)

"Maybe five years from now I'll be like, 'Man, that was weird; my band sold a million records.'"
—Pete Wentz

The band members' obsessive tendencies resonate well with their fans. Fall Out Boy shows their appreciation on a level foreign to most musicians, and FOB fans, in turn, are notoriously obsessive over Fall Out Boy. The devotees know every word from every Fall Out Boy song, and sing them loudly at the shows. And seeing Fall Out Boy perform in front of the sold-out crowd of over 2,700 was exciting. The entire State Theater was shaking (even the balcony!) as the fans fed off Fall Out Boy's awesome onstage energy. At one point during the performance, Wentz actually threw his bass



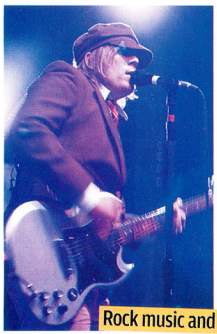
guitar about 20 feet across the stage to a nearby stagehand, who took up playing where Wentz left off so the bassist could climb atop a high lighting structure and dive into the screaming fans—it was utter mayhem. And that was just Fall Out Boy's performance. Each of the five bands performing that night had their own onstage antics, and audience members showed their full appreciation from the beginning of the night to the end.

The bands on the tour are definitely enjoying their time on the road with Nintendo. The members of Fall Out Boy are making the most of their newfound success, playing tons of games and connecting with fans. "Maybe five years from now I'll be like, 'Man, that was weird; my band sold a million records,'" remarks Wentz. "We never expected [*From Under the Cork Tree*] to do as well as it has done already," adds Trohman. "It's definitely thanks to all our fans."

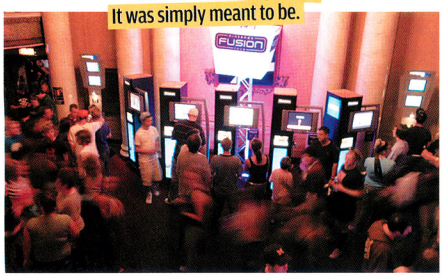
Though much of the Fusion Tour's popularity can be attributed to Fall Out Boy's recent success, the event's mixture of games and music makes the experience truly memorable. If concertgoers at the State Theater grew tired of watching bands, they could head into the lobby to play games or enter contests. Dozens of Nintendo GameCube and DS stations were set up, allowing the crowd to play a variety of unreleased games, including Mario Kart DS and The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. Super Mario Strikers was also a hit at the show, inspiring multiplayer bouts between fans and band members.

After five musical acts and plenty of game time, the night came to a close. The Detroit show looks to be the first of many sold-out stops on the tour—tickets are selling fast in every city (visit www.nintendofusiontour.com for up-to-date ticket information).

—Andy M.



Rock music and video games? It was simply meant to be.



Fall Out Boy Interviews Nintendo Power

During our interview with Fall Out Boy, the band turned the tables and barraged us with a series of questions (and demands). We've printed the questions and comments along with our responses here.

Q: "Gyromite and . . . what was the name of that thing?" —Andy Hurley
A: R.O.B. (Robotic Operating Buddy)

Q: "Ghouls 'N Ghosts, Ghosts 'N Goblins . . . are those the same thing?" —Andy Hurley
A: No, Ghouls 'N Ghosts was a sequel to Ghosts 'N Goblins.

Q: "Has anyone ever beat Ghosts 'N Goblins?" —Pete Wentz
A: Many claim to have beaten Ghosts 'N Goblins. We know that NP writer Chris Hoffman has finished the Game Boy Color version of the game. To be fair, though, the GBC version has game-saving capabilities.

Q: "I could never get into [the Minus World]." —Pete Wentz
A: At the end of World 1-2, stand atop the exit pipe as Super or Fire Mario, break the second brick from the right. While facing left and crouching, jump toward the opening you created and press right—you'll be transported through the solid wall.

Q: "We want a copy of *The Wizard* on DVD." —Pete Wentz
A: There has been no official DVD release of the American version, but plenty of VHS versions are floating around.

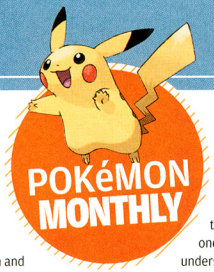
Q: "Someone should put out a soundtrack with the Castlevania music on it." —Patrick Stump
A: No one has released any Castlevania soundtracks commercially in the US, but there are numerous Japanese versions—NP writer Chris Hoffman has like 10 of them!

Q: Was there ever a Goonies I?"—Pete Wentz
A: Yes. While many assumed that Konami's The Goonies II was simply a sequel to the movie *The Goonies*, it was actually a sequel to a Japanese-only NES game based on the movie.

Q: What happened to Blaster Master and Kid Icarus?" —Patrick Stump
A: Blaster Master had a number of sequels on the Game Boy Color, Sega Genesis and Sony PlayStation, though none ever quite lived up to the original. Kid Icarus, however, has been mostly silent since the 1991 Game Boy game Kid Icarus: Of Myth and Monsters.

Q: Why is Balloon Fight the best game ever?" —Pete Wentz
A: Because it's fun.

Fire! No, Psychic!



In Volume 195 we asked readers to submit essays about what kind of Pokémon they would be if they had the opportunity. We got all kinds of great responses! Here are some of the best.

BOO!

If I were a Pokémon I'd be a Ghost-type because I scare people, some people say I'm scary looking and ghost Pokémon have a sick sense of humor like I do.

–Demon Y-AT

USE YOUR HEAD

Game conventions aside, the only Pokémon type I would consider is Psychic. The anime shows us that, rightly, Psychic-types far outpower every other type of Pokémon. Naturally, game dynamics require balancing the abilities of the Psychic-type against other types for fairness, so they are shown not to be as powerful as they might have been otherwise. If one considers bringing Pokémon abilities into the "real world," I would submit that not only will Psychic-types be the most powerful, but also the most versatile. Far from the crude attack-oriented manner as they're used in the anime, Psychic-types' telekinetic abilities could help man build things like bridges faster and more safely. Imagine if you will several Psychic-types working in unison to raise a space station into orbit! Also, with constant training, the abilities of the Psychic-type will continue to grow, as what are the ultimate limits on the power of the mind? An Electric-type, for example, can only generate so much electricity, governed by whatever chemical process they employ. So, while being hard as rock or able to fly might be useful, Psychic-type remains, for me, the only logical choice.

–Robert Z.

SLEEP TALK

If I were a Pokémon, I'd be lazy
I'd lay around all day and sleep like crazy
In a grump rage I'll attack you
With my Body Slam attack through and through
Get out of my way if you have food
Because I am a very big dude
Ludacris has nothing on my Rollout
Because a thousand-pound creature is what I am about
You can try and burn and freeze me
But I'm protected by a certain immunity
Ghost attacks don't affect me at most
Unless Foresight is used by a Pokémon host
I don't like Fighting-types at all
Since I'll use Defense Curl into a gigantic ball
With my HP and Attack at max
The name people call me is Snorlax
To end this rhyme I am like a gentle giant
Except when I'm hungry I am very defiant

–Light Sneasel

TRIPLE THREAT

If I were a Pokémon, I would be the first "Tri"-type Pokémon ever—a Pokémon that's a combination of Electric-, Fire-, and Water-type, and would resemble a dragon. Being of many different types, I would be susceptible to many weaknesses. I would make up for this with enormous power, far greater than that of any Pokémon, even those of legend. My body would be a smooth silver color with streaks of yellow, red and blue lining up my back. They would meet atop my forehead, each adorning the three horns located there, where the bulk of my power generates. I would have a long tail with a scythe-like tip used like a powerful slash attack. My eyes would glow yellow, red and blue one after the other. My most powerful attack would be Trichaos—gathering power from the earth, it would be much like Tri Attack, but far more powerful. I would like to be a Pokémon like this because I would like to be a unique creature, towering over all others like Mewtwo. My name would be Etrigon.

–Nick D.

ESSAY OF DARKNESS

If I were a Pokémon, I would be a Dark-type like Umbreon. Dark-type Pokémon are commonly misunderstood because they reflect the dangers of the shadows, but there is more than meets the eye. The gentle beauty and nature of Dark-type Pokémon takes my breath away with their ability to mimic the grace of the moon surrounded by hundreds of stars.

Even though Dark-type Pokémon have unmatched beauty, they are powerful and, for some, terrifying. Some consider Dark-type Pokémon to be unlucky, but people fear what they do not understand. Owning a Dark-type Pokémon is like bending all the power of the moon and the stars to your disposal; some would see this as a gift while others may think of it as a curse.

Only certain people can see the dark as a divine grace; most see it as an unknown world. Few can actually harness its awesome powers. I would show people the true power and majestic ways of the Dark-type Pokémon if I could be one. If people don't take the time to understand what they do not know, they will fear them forever.

–ShadowSong

ZAAAAP!

If I had to be a Pokémon, I would be an Electric-type. Here's why. Electric-type Pokémon have all the best capabilities. The power to produce electric shocks from your cheeks is really handy, as is being able to swim. Think about it—you could earn big bucks running an electric-power company. The world would love it! No more energy problems about burning fossil fuels and all that. There would just be a couple of cute, lightning-charged critters powering all of the electric plants. I could also juice up the ol' GBA SP or DS anytime I wanted instead of going on a long car trip with a dead Game Boy. It would also solve the "Darn, the lightning caused a power surge and killed the game before I could save" problem. Imagine it: no more Super Smash Bros. bouts that end in midgame. It would also lower my power cost. And, the best reason of them all: the ability to make it thunder storm whenever I want. I would never have to go outside again and could play Sonic the whole day instead. That would be awesome.

–The Pokémon Masters

TURN UP THE HEAT

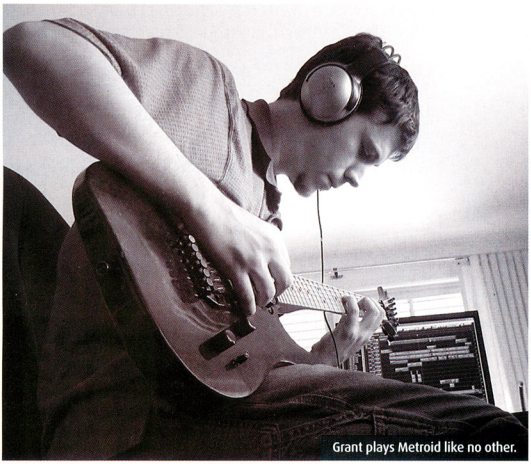
It flickers, flares, and blazes . . . It's powerful, beautiful, and passionate. I'd never even dream of being a Pokémon type other than Fire-type! When faced with the strength of fire, grass wilts and burns, and bugs run for cover. Ice melts into nothing, and steel follows suit. Even water may turn to steam when fire burns at its peak! Fire is the strongest offensive power there is, with attacks like Fire Blast and Overheat, and the best defense is a strong offense! Who can argue, with mighty Pokémon like Charizard, Blaziken, Entei and Ho-oh? Who can disagree after they've encountered the searing heat of elegant, raging fire? My choice of fire goes even further than this; perhaps it was written for me in the stars. Both of my astrological signs, solar and lunar, point to fire—my solar sign is Aries and I was born in the Year of the Horse, whose natural element is fire in the lunar zodiac. It's little wonder that I hold the Fire-type in such high regard! Fire is proof of advancement; it is the strength of an advanced battler. As a Pokémon, I would settle for nothing less.

–Ryuko

NO DECISION

The question is a difficult question. There are 17 different types and they each have their good and bad points. There is no way to choose only one. I just can't pick. People shouldn't pick just one. They should like them all. So I choose all or none.

–Felicia O.



Grant plays Metroid like no other.

Metroid Metal

Is Samus into Slayer? After hearing Grant Henry's metal-inspired Metroid covers, you'd sure think so.

The Community section of Nintendo Power is all about people who have created their own communities based on their favorite games, and nothing we've covered fits that mold better than Grant Henry and his Metroid Metal project. "My favorite NES soundtrack was always Metroid," explains Henry. "It has a very foreboding, dissonant and epic feel, which is what good metal is made of. I had the idea of leaving the melodies intact, but going with my own interpretation of timing. I attempted the title-screen music, and posted the result on the Net for people to hear. The response was so huge, I decided to go back and do the entire game. It's been a blast."

> **"[Metroid] has a very foreboding, dissonant and epic feel, which is what good metal is made of."**
>
> —Grant Henry, Metroid Metal creator

Like most gaming communities, Metroid Metal thrives on the Web and on the support of like-minded fans. Henry appreciates the attention, but his love for Metroid games is his biggest inspiration. "The entire series has good music," says Henry. "More recently, I've done some of the more-popular Super Metroid tunes like Lower Norfair, Maridia and Ridley's Theme."

Henry's Metroid appreciation ventures into newer Metroid games as well. "The Phendrana Drifts music from Metroid Prime is probably my favorite piece from a more recent Metroid game," he says. Though there's still plenty of untapped Metroid music that Henry has yet to turn metal, he looks forward to trying out the upcoming Metroid titles for DS. "I think both [Metroid Prime Hunters and Metroid Prime Pinball] will be fun," he says. "I'm playing my DS way too much, so that's just something else to add to the pile. I'm a sucker for good pinball, even though I'll have to see how Metroid plays into it. The Hunters demo is very cool, although I could see myself getting more into the single-player side of it. Metroid has always been a single-player game for me." We look forward to Metroid's future as well, and to how it will inspire Henry's work. "As long as the video game community finds something substantial in that music, you'll keep hearing Metroid Metal." (Check out www.metroidmetal.com to hear the tunes.) —Andy M.

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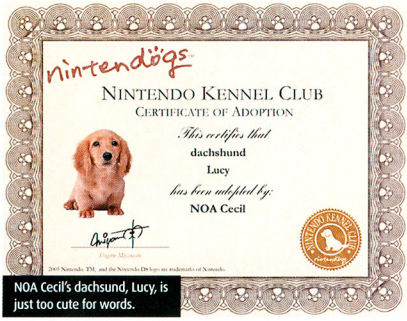
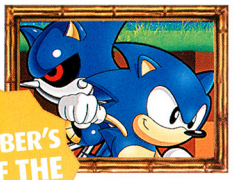


NOA Cecil's dachsund, Lucy, is just too cute for words.

.com Canines

We're not usually so self-congratulatory (yeah, right), but we gotta give a hand to the folks behind nintendogs.com. Not only does it contain tons of info about our favorite puppy sim, but the Nintendo Kennel Club forums are the hottest place to talk 'dogs. You can also download desktop photos and a Miyamoto-signed certificate with your pup's name!

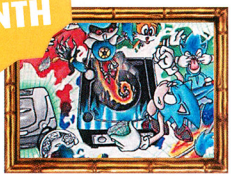
SEPTEMBER'S ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST:
BIGGESTSONICFAN

SUBJECT:
Sonic the Hedgehog

Computer-Drawn Category



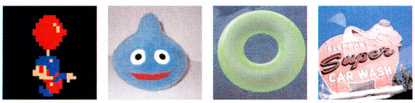
ARTIST:
THETRUELEGEND

SUBJECT:
Sonic the Hedgehog

Hand-Drawn Category

Check out the amazing artwork highlighting our favorite blue video game character (no, not Falco). Submit your own masterpieces at **forums.nintendo.com**.

Custom-Made Avatars — **By Kim Logan**



Sage Reviews

The response to the increased length of Sage Reviews has been great! Thank you, sages, for all your hard work!

Sage Review of the Month

Advance Wars: Dual Strike

reviewed by
THEWINDWAKER10

Most sequels are generally bland and have a lot of reused material, but this isn't at all true of Advance Wars: Dual Strike. With its great integration of both the stylus and the dual screens, one must wonder how they ever played Advance Wars before it existed on the DS. Dual Strike is easily one of the best games on the DS today.

The most noticeable difference about Dual Strike is the stylus control. Instead of taking the time to map out unit movement via the [Control Pad], units can now be moved with much greater ease. Although there are several drawbacks to using it, the touch-screen control is a great innovation to the Advance Wars series. Another great addition to the series is CO tag powers. Instead of using one Super CO Power, you can now unleash two deadly [ones] in a row. This can turn the tide of battle in an instant, and will challenge even the most experienced players.

There are many new units to be found in Dual Strike, as well. From Piperunners to Stealth Bombers, Dual Strike has enlarged its already huge range of units. And of course, each CO can use those units to his/her advantage, depending on their strengths and weaknesses.

Nintendo and Intelligent Systems have made one of the best strategy games of all time even better—Dual Strike is a must-own.

Excerpts from Other Sage Reviews

Trace Memory
"The puzzles throughout the game are intricately designed, with some simple and some extremely complex answers. Each puzzle brings you deeper into the storyline with something new to discover."—MELEE_GURL

Pac 'n Roll
"The game's challenge and time-attack modes are extremely difficult; in a way, that's more frustrating than fun. Also, the levels in the game are pretty short, as is the game as a whole."—WALUIGICUBED

What's a Sage?
Sages are members of the NSider online community that are put through the wringer and hand-picked by Nintendo. They get tons of special privileges, including opportunities to review games for Nintendo Power magazine.

RARE WARES

Do you have a complete collection of Nintendo Fun Club News issues? How about a copy of A Link to the Past autographed by Miyamoto himself? We wanna see what video game-related item you hold most dear. Send us a picture and description, and we may show it off in an upcoming issue of Nintendo Power!

community@nintendopower.com
pokemon_community@nintendopower.com

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PATH OF RADIANCE
IN A LAND OF MAN AND BEAST, YOUR SMALL BAND OF MERCENARIES MUST NOW SAVE THE WORLD FROM A REAWAKENING EVIL FORCE. YOU'LL MAKE YOUR FIGHT ON THE 3D BATTLEFIELDS OF TELLIUS, WHERE STRATEGY IS ESSENTIAL AND DEATH IS FINAL. SO SHARPEN YOUR AXE. DRAW YOUR SWORD. IT'S TIME TO IGNITE THE FLAMES OF WAR.
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KNOW YOUR ROLE

With the masterful Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance consuming our every waking moment, we've put together a quiz that lets us reminisce over some of our favorite RPGs. Visit **nintendopower.com/quiz** for the answers today, or wait for your next issue.

1 In Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones, who betrays your party to live in Renais Castle with his deceased wife?
a. Lyon
b. Garcia
c. Kyle
d. Orson

2 Which character from SNES classic Chrono Trigger is Princess Nadia in disguise?

a. Lucca **b.** Marle **c.** Ayla

3 Mario's companion Mallow is the grandson of which character in Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars?
a. Frogfucius
b. Bowser
c. Smithy
d. Jinx
e. King Calamari

4 Which RPG for the Game Boy Advance was developed by the team responsible for Sega Saturn masterpiece Shining Force III?
a. Shining Soul
b. Tactics Ogre: The Knights of Lodis
c. Golden Sun
d. Final Fantasy Tactics Advance

5 Marth and Roy of Super Smash Bros. Melee fame hail from which series?
a. Final Fantasy
b. Phantasy Star Online
c. Fire Emblem
d. Shining Force

6 The upcoming GBA title Final Fantasy IV was originally released for the SNES as what game?
a. Final Fantasy II
b. Final Fantasy III
c. Final Fantasy: Mystic Quest

7 Which game introduced Djinn, small creatures that could join with your party members to give them new powers?
a. Breath of Fire
b. Golden Sun
c. Tales of Symphonia
d. Secret of Mana

8 What game plot involves a group of children who are transported from the real world to a fantasy world by way of an ancient book?
a. Final Fantasy Tactics Advance
b. EarthBound
c. Sword of Mana
d. The Final Fantasy Legend

9 The mighty Paladin Cecil hails from which RPG?
a. Summoner: A Goddess Reborn
b. Heroes of Might and Magic
c. Final Fantasy II

10 Which of these EarthBound characters does not have psychic abilities?

a. Ness

a. Paula

a. Jeff

a. Poo

11 What legendary NES RPG was given away to new Nintendo Power subscribers in 1989?
a. Dragon Warrior
b. Final Fantasy
c. Faxanadu

Last month's answers: 1: d, 2: a, 3: a, 4: c, 5: d, 6: a, 7: b, 8: c, 9: b, 10: a, 11:c

American Idol, look out!

PIXEL-PERFECT

NAME THAT SCREENSHOT

In a time when RPG plots tended to borrow heavily from each other, the game depicted in the screenshot above broke the mold in almost every way. Can you identify which game this quirky band appeared in?

LAST MONTH'S FEATURE:
POKéMON TRADING CARD GAME (GBA)

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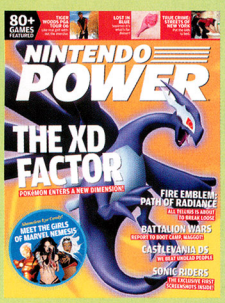

NOVEMBER 2005, VOLUME 197
Out of the Shadows (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Fantastic Voyage (Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance), Inside Zelda, NP Top 200, The Bad Girls of Nemesis (Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects), Army of One (Spartan: Total Warrior), Here Comes the Boom (Batallion Wars), Test Your Memory (Trace Memory), Dead of the Dawn (Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow), True Crime: New York City, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble, Tony Hawk's American Wasteland, Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble, The Chronicles of Narnia, Super Mario Strikers, Donkey Kong Country 3, The Sims 2

OCTOBER 2005, VOLUME 196
Into the Fire (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire), The Art of War (Spartan: Total Warrior), NP Top 200, Return of the King (King Kong), Inside Zelda, Land of the Lost (Lost in Blue), Trace Elements (Trace Memory), 2-D or Not 2-D, Hero Worship (Gunstar Super Heroes), Hulk's Bosses Need a Beating (The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction), War-Torn? (Advance Wars: Dual Strike), Build the Ultimate Weapon (Sigma Star Saga), SSX on Tour, Battalion Wars, Ultimate Spider-Man, Tak: The Great Juju Challenge, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, New Puppy Magazine (Nintendogs)

SEPTEMBER 2005, VOLUME 195
Sega Goes Hog Wild (Shadow the Hedgehog, Sonic Rush, Sonic Gems Collection), Man's Best Friend (Nintendogs), The Agony and the XD (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Bros. of Summer (Mario Superstar Baseball), Help Wanted (Trauma Center), The Zelda Demo, Inside Zelda, Out of Bounds?, Madden NFL 06, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Smash Bros. Melee, Prince of Persia 3, Mario Tennis Advance, Metroid Prime Pinball, NBA Live 06, WWE: Day of Reckoning 2, Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix

AUGUST 2005, VOLUME 194
Mario Kart DS, I Love LA (E3 Wrap-Up), Built to Last, Nintendo World, Historical License, Make Your Move, Lunar: Dragon Song, Meteos, Age of Empires: The Age of Kings, DK: King of Swing, Zoo Tycoon, The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, One Piece, Zatch Bell!, Pac 'n Roll, Madden NFL 06, Inside Zelda

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Teen (13+)

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Adult (18+)

Rating Pending

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January 2006 Vol. 199

NEXT MONTH

Enough previews, reviews, news and strategies to satiate even Wario's appetite.

CALIFORNIA WHEELIN'

Tony Hawk's American Sk8land for DS is a 3-D thrasher's dream. Catch our trick tips and Wi-Fi skitching details.

OOH, BABY!

The Mario Bros. join their juniors in Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, and we offer baby-guiding advice.

CALL OF THE WILD

If you listen carefully, you can hear Animal Crossing fans clammering for info on DS sequel Wild World. Check out our feature and review.

WORLD RACER

Hop on! Mario Kart DS is going live via the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, allowing you to race around the world without leaving your home. We'll have details and strategies next issue.

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WWE: DAY OF RECKONING 2
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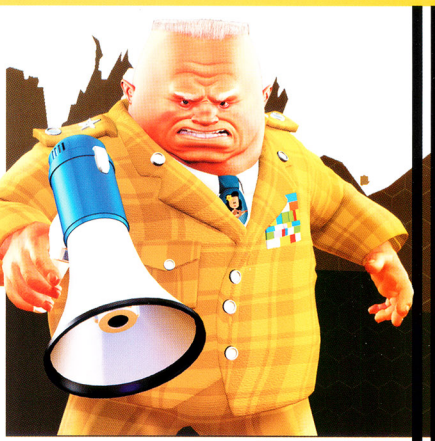

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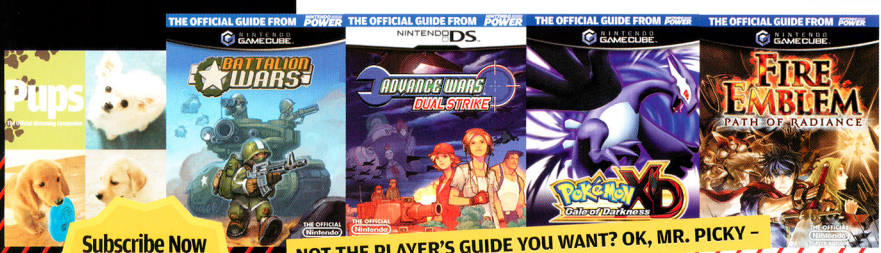

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EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor
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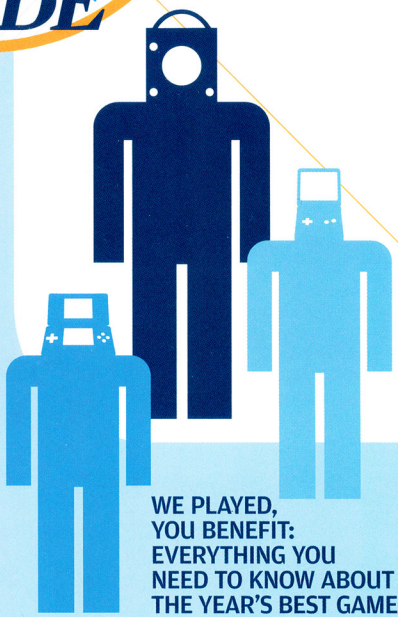

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Elf Bowling 2 –

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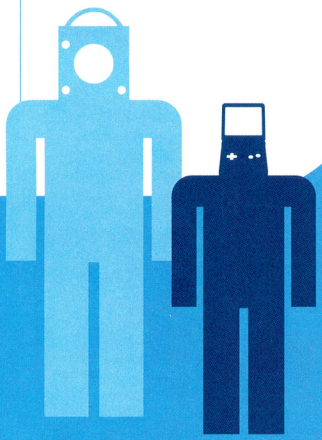
SEASON'S GREETINGS

'Tis the season to play more games.

Ah, the holiday season. Time for visiting with friends and family, frolicking in the snow and feasting on winter treats. But who needs all that when you ve got so many video games to play? That s where this handy guide comes in: How else will you decide which games and systems to ask your loved ones for, or choose what games to give them? When you re done warming up to the year s hottest reviews, devouring previews of the sweetest upcoming holiday hits and celebrating affordability with value-packed hardware bundles and Player s Choice titles, pass along the convenient checklist to your favorite gift-giver.



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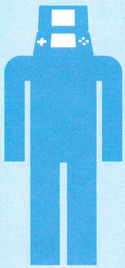
GUIDANCE SYSTEM 4
ON THE RADAR 14
HARD-WIRED 16
BUNDLE UP 17
CHOICE CUTS 18
WISH LIST/GAME INDEX 19



GUIDANCE SYSTEM

Your direct link to the best games in every genre for each system

Nintendogs. Battalion Wars. WarioWare: Twisted! Mario Superstar Baseball. So many games. So few presents. Fortunately, we've compiled all the highest-scoring Nintendo Power reviews from 2005 into one easy-to-use supplement, conveniently divided by game type. No matter what kind of gamer you are, you'll find something to suit your tastes.

MEET THE REVIEWERS

The crew picks its most-wanted games.

STEVEN GRIMM
Animal Crossing (plus I'll be giving it to my pals back in Wisconsin), Mario Kart DS, Trauma Center and Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time.

CHRIS HOFFMAN
I love my DS—there are so many great games. I need Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow, Phoenix Wright and Trauma Center, in particular.

ANDY MYERS
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land will enter my DS on its launch day, and it will not be removed until the year 2009.

CHRIS SHEPPERD
Between wireless play with my friends and Wi-Fi connectivity across the world, I can't wait to get my hands on Mario Kart DS.

GEORGE SINFIELD
My most anticipated film and game for the holiday season are the same: Peter Jackson's take on King Kong.

STEVE THOMASON
All I want is to lock myself in a room with Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance for a week. Oh, and Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow.

FOR THE NONCONFORMIST

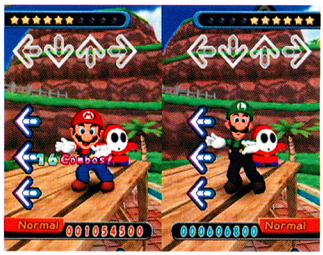
DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: MARIO MIX

Groove the night away with Mario and friends—dance pad generously included.

"Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix isn't just a typical DDR game with a Mario makeover. The game does a good job of blending elements from Mario's universe with classic DDR gameplay." —ANDY M.

7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: KONAMI/NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE



NINTENDOGS

Raise, train and care for your own lovable virtual dog. Now this is puppy power!

"From the moment you select your puppy and take it home from the kennel, you'll bond with it using touch control to pet and scratch it, and voice control to call it by name and give it training commands. It takes absolutely no stretch of the imagination to believe that there is an actual puppy on the other side of the screen." —GEORGE S.

8.5

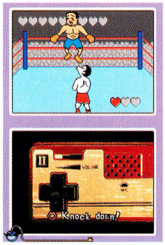
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE

All the fun of having your own cuddly puppy but without picking up after it.

WARIOWARE: TOUCHED!

Touch-screen insanity raises the frenetic WarioWare gameplay to new heights.

"The Nintendo DS's innovative control features and WarioWare's flood of zany microgames prove to be a perfect match in an all-new touch-controlled collection of three-second gems. The fun is in figuring out how to succeed in each of the more than 200 microgames and in unlocking new game collections and dozens of souvenirs." —GEORGE S.



9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE

METROID PRIME PINBALL

Using the Metroid universe as inspiration, MPP is a stellar take on a classic pastime.

"The detailed tables are spot-on interpretations of Prime worlds as pinball landscapes, and enemy hordes spread out over the boards, causing havoc for the tumbling bounty hunter. The game is a fully realized and well-tuned hybrid of pinball play and Metroid Prime atmosphere, and it sets the bar high for other pinball-action games to come." —GEORGE S.

9.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: FUSE GAMES
ESRB: EVERYONE

WARIOWARE: TWISTED!

With loads of zany new microgames, Twisted will make your head spin.

"Like its predecessors, WarioWare: Twisted! offers more than 200 microgames broken into character-hosted categories. And it breaks ground with a gameplay turn. The pak is built with a gyro sensor that detects movement, challenging you to complete each task by moving your handheld in addition to pushing its buttons." —GEORGE S.

8.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE

It's Wario's game, but the world is at Mario's feet.

TRAUMA CENTER: UNDER THE KNIFE

Unlike most games, Trauma Center is about saving lives instead of taking them.

"If a surgeon accidentally dropped WarioWare: Touched! into a patient then sewed him up, we'd likely have something like Trauma Center. It's extremely fun; that is, if you can stand pressure-cooker scenarios that rival the toughest bosses out there." —STEVEN G.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ATLUS
DEVELOPER: ATLUS
ESRB: TEEN

PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY

Defend the innocent and expose the guilty in this courtroom graphic adventure.

"Is practicing law dull? Not in this game. Courtroom scenes move at a tennis-match pace as manga-style action slashes back and forth between you, the prosecution and the witness on the stand. Intense, yes. But never too serious." —STEVEN G.

8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
ESRB: TEEN

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

Whether alone or co-op, Splinter Cell is your ticket to intense military thrills.

"Chances are, you aren't an elite spy with the training to sneak up and knock out or interrogate bad guys, but Ubisoft's third Splinter Cell adventure will make you feel like one. With an incredible assembly of spy gear, Chaos Theory is a complex espionage thriller that is surprisingly easy to pick up and play." —GEORGE S.

8.0 GCN **8.0** DS

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE, NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT (GCN), GAMELOFT (DS)
ESRB: MATURE (GCN), TEEN (DS)

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Play the hero as Spidey or the bad boy as Venom. It's the ultimate Spider-Man game.

"Not only does Ultimate Spider-Man follow the story of its namesake comic, but it also looks like the book. Control for both Venom and Spider-Man is responsive and fairly intuitive, considering all the variety of fighting, climbing and jumping moves that the characters can pull off." —GEORGE S.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: TREYARCH
ESRB: TEEN

VIEWTIFUL JOE: DOUBLE TROUBLE

Joe's got all-new VFX powers to lay down the smack. Henshin-a-Go-Go again, baby!

"Now that it's on the DS and able to take advantage of the capabilities that touch sensitivity and dual screens afford, Viewtiful Joe is more innovative than ever; but while the action and uniqueness still impress, a few flaws prevent Joe from being all he can be." —CHRIS H.

7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CLOVER STUDIO
ESRB: TEEN

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR

Feel the fury of battle as you slash your way into the heart of the Roman Empire.

"When it's at its best, Spartan offers an unparalleled sense of size and scope. Some of the environments are truly massive, and even with over a hundred soldiers on-screen at once, the frame rate remains consistently smooth. Rounding out the presentation is some solid voice acting and a quality soundtrack." —STEVE T.

8.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY
ESRB: MATURE

FOR THE PLATFORM FAN

DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT

Feel the rhythm of something totally unique: a platformer played with bongos.

"When I first heard about DKJB, I dismissed it as a gimmick. The game is absolutely brilliant, though. It's both comfortingly familiar and unique." —STEVE T.

"It's hard to put into words the way one reacts mentally while playing this game—it's so intuitive it's like your brain is moving the big ape directly." —CHRIS S.

"In my fantasy life, there are already 10 sequels planned for DKJB." —STEVEN G.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

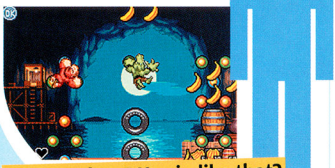
DK: KING OF SWING

Put the big ape through his paces in a completely different twist on platforming.

"Donkey Kong Country in a blender: that's the DKKOS experience. King of Swing is as primally acrobatic as Donkey Kong's bongo platformer Jungle Beat, but on the GBA you'll perform moves with only L and R. Once you get used to careening like a shotput through jungles, deserts, snowy landscapes and grottoes, it's pretty thrilling. Daring DK fans should still give the game a spin." —STEVEN G.

8.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: PAON
ESRB: EVERYONE



What makes DK spin like that?
Maybe bananas cause gas.

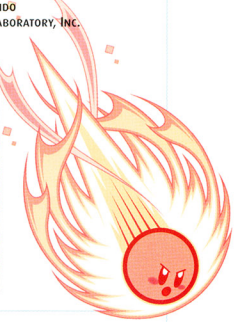
KIRBY: CANVAS CURSE

Forget traditional game mechanics. Kirby's latest lets you unleash your inner artist.

"Fully stylus-driven, Kirby's new 2-D adventure spans many worlds (lava, caves, grottoes, etc.) that you've seen in previous platform games, but every one's an eye-opener thanks to the new control scheme. You'll make Kirby (made spherical by a witch's curse) dash forward by jabbing him, and you can guide him by scrawling rainbow paths for him to follow." —STEVEN G.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: HAL LABORATORY, INC.
ESRB: EVERYONE



TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE

Two-player fun and top-notch voice acting make Tak's third time a charm.

"The adventure, which pits Tak and Lok against three pairs of adventurers from competing tribes in a race for the favors of the Moon Juju, reaches well beyond the depth and quality of previous Tak games. Jumping sections are much more forgiving than in previous Tak games, and the teamwork-driven puzzle-solving is challenging but rarely frustrating. Two players work simultaneously using a split screen, and the second player can drop in and out of the game at will." —GEORGE S.

8.5 GCN **7.0** DS

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE, NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: AVALANCHE SOFTWARE (GCN), ALTRON (DS)
ESRB: EVERYONE

FOR THE ADVENTURER

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Years ago, Capcom created survival horror. With Resident Evil 4, they've reinvented it.

"Possibly the best console video game ever made, and definitely the standard that horror titles will be measured by for years to come." —**Steven G.**

"What happens to Leon happens to you. It's fast, frightening and nearing perfection. If you've shied away from the series in the past, now is the time to jump in. It's so good, it's scary." —**George S.**

"The story is thick, the action is intense and the gameplay is unbelievable." —**Chris S.**

10

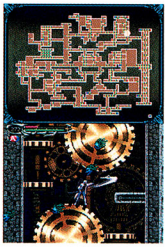
PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Capcom**
DEVELOPER: **Capcom**
ESRB: **Mature**

European village chain-saw massacre!

CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW

That haunting atmosphere, those chilling enemies . . . this is Castlevania at its finest.

"Dawn of Sorrow takes 2-D graphics above and beyond all other titles of its kind. Each new Castlevania game is a step closer to perfection. You get the feeling that the developers are using the franchise to hone in on what they consider the ideal gaming experience." —**Chris S.**



9.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Konami**
DEVELOPER: **Konami**
ESRB: **Teen**

TRACE MEMORY

A teenage girl explores a mysterious island to find her father and solve a murder.

"The game uses every opportunity to challenge your investigative abilities. It also keeps the puzzle-solving process neatly contained. The game's atmosphere is rich with creepy music and sparkling dialogue, though some players may find the game long on conversation and short on action." —**George S.**

8.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Cing**
ESRB: **Teen**

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP

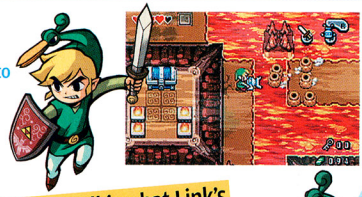
The power to shrink to micro size leads to enormous fun in Link's latest 2-D epic.

"The Minish Cap is a meritorious entry in gaming's most storied franchise. The ability to shrink yourself leads to some clever dungeon designs." —**Steve T.**

"A million small details add up to a wonderfully real world." —**Steven G.**

9.5

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Capcom**
ESRB: **Everyone**



Yes, that's a talking hat Link's wearing on his head.

No, it doesn't eat babies. Probably.

BATTALION WARS

The battlefield heats up with an intense mix of strategy and real-time combat.

"Though you command a large force, you control only one unit directly at a time and switch control from unit to unit with minimal effort. The ability to lead the charge with soldiers, missile launchers, tanks, helicopters, bombers and fighter jets—all in one battle—gives the game a serious edge." —GEORGE S.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: KUJU
ESRB: TEEN

METEOS

Save the planets in this addictive puzzle game of intergalactic significance.

"Though the basic concept may seem familiar—you line up like-colored blocks that fall from the sky—the game is quite a departure from the genre norm. The blocks transform into rockets and launch back into space, carrying with them any blocks piled above." —STEVE T.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: Q ENTERTAINMENT/BANDAI
ESRB: EVERYONE

Who knew that falling blocks could cause planetary destruction?

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

New elements join the tactical gameplay for another great Fire Emblem game.

"Though Path of Radiance is the series's first foray on the GCN, it's a Fire Emblem game through and through. The fundamentals are all present—they've just been amplified. Path of Radiance has more character types, more weapons and even more chapters than previous FE games." —ANDY M.

9.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS
ESRB: TEEN

ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE

The war against the Black Hole Army continues with new units and new CO teams.

"AWDS has what Advance Wars 2 lacked: a substantial number of new unit types. But AWDS goes beyond simply adding content to the series. There are changes to the gameplay, including the ability to assign two COs to one army. It incorporates the hardware's functionality in some interesting ways." —ANDY M.

9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS
ESRB: EVERYONE

If you think his weapons look deadly, wait until you see his suplex.

KILLER 7

You simply won't understand this surreal, twisted FPS until you play it.

"To play Capcom's violent, art-game epic is to give in to the insanity of its wheelchair-bound antihero, Harman Smith—an assassin who can morph into seven player-controlled personalities—and live in a world in which dead associates give you advice and your enemies are invisible, save for their shimmering skin." —GEORGE S.

8.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: GRASSHOPPER
ESRB: MATURE

STAR FOX: ASSAULT

Whether in a spacecraft, in a tank or on foot, Star Fox: Assault is explosive fun.

"Star Fox: Assault pits Fox McCloud and his pals against enemies old and new in a 10-mission war story that resolves old rivalries and starts new ones. The action is splendid, and three play-control schemes ensure that you'll have smooth sailing through the story and multi-player battles." —GEORGE S.

8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NAMCO
ESRB: TEEN

NANOSTRAY

Classic-style shooting with nonstop action and relentless pattern-based enemies.

"After you're done being dazzled by Nanostray's extraordinarily beautiful 3-D backgrounds and sleek spaceships, the next thing about the game that will hit you is just how freakin' hard it is. You're bombarded with pulses, lasers, explosives and stray enemies from all angles with absolutely no breaks. Ever." —GEORGE S.

8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: SHIN'EN
ESRB: EVERYONE

SIGMA STAR SAGA

An action-RPG/shooter hybrid, Sigma Star Saga is bursting with innovation.

"Like many RPGs, the game has random battles, but it goes where no RPG has gone before—into space for shooter levels. And very often! Before you reach the next save spot, you'll likely be beamed up 30 times. The variety keeps the interruptions from becoming unwelcome, as does the Gun Data system." —STEVEN G.

8.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NAMCO
DEVELOPER: WAYFORWARD
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Watch out! One false move and you'll wind up deep-fried and extracrispy.

FOR THE ROLE-PLAYER

HARVEST MOON: MORE FRIENDS OF MINERAL TOWN

If you've ever thought about living the farming life, this is the game for you.

"You work at your own pace, relishing the great depth of the RPG-influenced system while harvesting crops, wooing a mate, raising animals and performing about a million other tasks. Harvest Moon games are not for everyone, nor are they all good. But this one is, as long as you have the patience to savor the experience." —Andy M.

8.5

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Natsume
DEVELOPER: Marvelous Interactive
ESRB: Everyone

Spend the day farming and fishing. It's a pure and simple life.

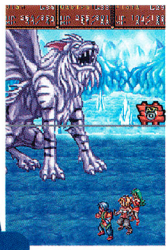
LUNAR: DRAGON SONG

Return to a fascinating world of magic and Dragon Masters, only on DS. Take heed!

"Despite falling short of expectations, Lunar: Dragon Song ultimately delivers a worthwhile adventure. The story has its moments, the music is quite good, and Toshiyuki Kubooka's character designs lend the game a warm familiarity." —Steve T.

7.0

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: JAM/Game Arts
ESRB: Everyone 10+



POKéMON EMERALD

This expansion on Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire offers more fun for Pokémon fans.

"Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen redefined the art of the Pokémon 'director's cut,' spreading new content through the story, then lavishing more near its finale. Pokémon Emerald may do only the latter, but the plot twists and battle finale are worth the wait for fans." —Steven G.

6.5

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Game Freak
ESRB: Everyone

POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

Get swept up in a quest to save Pokémon from an evil organization.

"The intriguing story and challenging gameplay are enough to please any RPG gamer, and in-game tutorials make it so you don't need to be a Master Trainer to be able to pick up XD and enjoy it right away. Visually, Pokémon XD goes way beyond expectation. The environments look crisp and detailed, complete with added light and reflection effects. XD provides a perfect environment for battling friends." —Chris S.

8.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Genius Sonority
ESRB: Everyone

FOR ATHLETES & SPEED DEMONS

Tougher than Tinactin!

MADDEN NFL 06

As it does year after year, Madden scores with a great game of football.

"In addition to the vastly improved passing game, there are tons of new player animations, the AI is smarter than ever, and there are even more ways to adjust each play before the snap. If you're ready for some football, this may be the only game in town, but it's still championship material." —**Steve T.**

9.0 GCN **8.0** DS **7.0** GBA

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube, Nintendo DS, Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **Electronic Arts**
ESRB: **Everyone**

WWE DAY OF RECKONING 2

Step into the ring with 45 superstars in the GCN's best wrestling game yet.

"Day of Reckoning 2 boasts a number of improvements over its predecessor. The character models rank among the best ever seen on the GCN. Each wrestler's dialogue more accurately portrays his real-life persona (though there's still no voice acting, unfortunately), and the overall presentation does a better job of re-creating what you see on a WWE broadcast." —**Steve T.**

8.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **Yuke's**
ESRB: **Teen**

SSX ON TOUR

Insane tricks, huge courses, the addition of skiing—oh, and Mario guest-stars.

"The mountain is connected via paths from top to bottom, so the snowboarding mentality of just strapping in and heading down a mountain is alive and well. Indeed, that's where the most fun is to be had in this game—not in races or half-pipe challenges, but in the exhilaration of a monster freestyle run." —**Chris S.**

8.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **EA Canada**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

Subtle changes to Tiger's gameplay yield a more authentic game of golf.

"For the 2006 version, the pendulum swings toward more realistic scores with a revamped putting game and a modification to the basic swing. The overall playing experience is consistent with that of previous iterations—great, as always, with adjustments that ground the scores in PGA Tour-level reality." —**George S.**

9.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **EA Canada**
ESRB: **Everyone**

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

The streets of L.A. are your playground; BMX bikes are your new toys.

"Wasteland takes what was great from the Underground games and strips out all the lame antics. With its rich skateboarding history and unique west-coast attitude, there could not have been a better choice of city to build a game around than Los Angeles." —**Chris S.**

9.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Activision**
DEVELOPER: **Neversoft**
ESRB: **Teen**

RACING GEARS ADVANCE

Wild track design and tons of options highlight RGA's fast and furious RC-style racing.

"Supercharged cars race on 25 tracks. Choosing from 12 drivers and eight types of weapons, you must beat the field to the finish line by muscling your car around sharp turns and finding shortcuts. The game's far-overhead view serves the action well, but the cars appear very small, which could be a distraction." —George S.

7.5

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Orbital Media
DEVELOPER: Orbital Media
ESRB: Everyone

FIGHT NIGHT: ROUND 2

The most realistic boxing around, plus the inclusion of the classic Super Punch-Out!!

"By using the Control Stick for movement and the C Stick for punching, the game gives you direct and immediate control. After a few warm-up fights and training sessions, the controls become second nature and you can duck, lean and swing at will. The look of the game is flawless." —George S.

8.0

PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: EA Chicago
ESRB: Teen

MARIO SUPERSTAR BASEBALL

Mario takes the field in another sport, and once again it's a home run.

"As both a single-player baseball stadium tour and multiplayer party game, Mario Superstar Baseball is a solid hit. It's big on baseball fundamentals and chock-full of Mushroom Kingdom flair, plus it shows a keen awareness of the situational play that gives the nation's pastime its edge. Key matchups are set with dramatic camera angles and game-changing significance. The game's controls are top-notch." —George S.

9.0

PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Namco
ESRB: Everyone

America's favorite pastime is even better when the pitcher is a gorilla with a tie.

ALSO WORTH CHECKING OUT

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 3 — 8.0
PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
GENRE: Platformer ESRB: Everyone

FIFA SOCCER 06 — 8.0
PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Sports ESRB: Everyone

FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES — 9.5
PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
GENRE: Strategy ESRB: Everyone

GUNSTAR SUPER HEROES — 9.5
PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Sega
GENRE: Action ESRB: Everyone 10+

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION — 8.5
PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: VU Games
GENRE: Action ESRB: Teen

KLONOA 2: DREAM CHAMP TOURNAMENT — 8.5
PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Platformer ESRB: Everyone

LOST IN BLUE — 8.0
PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Adventure ESRB: Everyone 10+

MEGA MAN ZERO 4 — 8.5
PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Capcom
GENRE: Action ESRB: Everyone

NHL 06 — 8.5
PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Sports ESRB: Everyone 10+

PAC-PIX — 8.0
PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Alternative ESRB: Everyone

SONIC GEMS COLLECTION — 8.5
PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Sega
GENRE: Action ESRB: Everyone

***STAR WARS* EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH** — 8.0
PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
GENRE: Action ESRB: Everyone 10+

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT — 8.5
PLATFORM: Nintendo GameCube
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Shooter ESRB: Mature

YU-GI-OH!: NIGHTMARE TROUBADOUR — 8.0
PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Role-Playing
ESRB: Everyone

ON THE RADAR

Get ready for these red-hot games, all due before year's end.

SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

The mysterious Shadow from Sonic Adventure 2 Battle returns in his own game, using super speed and various weapons to unlock the secrets of his past.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: SEGA
GENRE: ACTION

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

Move to town, get your house, invite your friends over for a multiplayer visit and then do whatever you want—such as decorating your home, fishing or just hanging out.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: COMMUNICATION

MARIO PARTY 7

With new characters, eight-player competition, microphone support and more than 80 minigames, the newest Mario Party looks to be the biggest bash yet.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: BOARD GAME

SUPER MARIO STRIKERS

Soccer the Mario way! Choose characters such as Wario, Yoshi or Luigi as your team captain, then unleash power-ups like giant Koopa shells at the opposition.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: SPORTS

BURNOUT LEGENDS

The wild racing series screams onto the DS, with all the spectacular crashes and near misses that give it such an edge. Courses from the console versions and all-new features should make this a smash hit.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
GENRE: RACING

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

Again blending fighting, platforming and puzzle-solving, the latest in the PoP saga also adds new elements like chariot battles and Dark Prince transformation.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
GENRE: ACTION

Also look for BATTLES of PRINCE of PERSIA on DS

FINAL FANTASY IV

The classic RPG is finding a new home on the GBA. The fantastic storytelling, memorable characters and deep play mechanics return along with new features.

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: ROLE-PLAYING

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

Featuring both first-person survival adventuring as a human and third-person action as Kong, this movie adaptation should be a monstrous hit.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
GENRE: ADVENTURE

Also look for KONG: 8TH WONDER of the WORLD on DS and GBA

DR. MARIO/PUZZLE LEAGUE

Two fantastic puzzle games conveniently located on one game pak. Whether you're eliminating viruses in Dr. Mario or lining up blocks in Puzzle League, you'll love the addictive, combo-heavy gameplay.

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: PUZZLE

MARIO KART DS

All the fun of the previous Mario Kart games rolled into one—and now you can compete with friends anywhere, anytime, thanks to Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: RACING

MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME

Following up the hit GBA original, Partners in Time sends Mario and Luigi back to the past where they team up with baby versions of themselves to fend off an alien invasion.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: ROLE-PLAYING

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND

Even though Tony Hawk has been scaled down for portable systems, it packs all the fun of its console brethren and then some. The DS version incorporates touch-screen editing, custom voice clips and more.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS, GBA
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
GENRE: SPORTS

SONIC RUSH

Twice the screens, twice the speed. It's classic 2-D Sonic platforming action, now with bigger levels, new characters, 3-D boss battles and touch-screen minigames.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: SEGA
GENRE: PLATFORMER

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Just in time for the fourth Potter movie, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire lets three players cooperate as Harry attempts to win the Triwizard Tournament.

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
GENRE: ADVENTURE

Also coming to Nintendo DS and Game Boy Advance

HARD-WIRED

The games are great, but you'll need the hardware first!

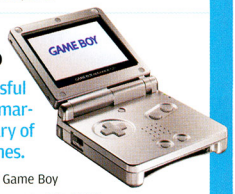
This is where it all begins. Whether you opt for the at-home experience with the Nintendo GameCube, the innovation of the DS, the portability of the Game Boy Advance SP or the style of the Game Boy Micro, limitless fun is guaranteed.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Powerful, affordable and home to gaming's biggest franchises.

The Nintendo GameCube is the exclusive console for must-have franchises like The Legend of Zelda and Pokémon. It's hip to be square.

GAME BOY ADVANCE SP



The most successful portable on the market offers a library of hundreds of games.

Still going strong, the Game Boy Advance SP makes the most of its 32-bit power. More than 800 games are available, covering every genre and gaming interest.

NINTENDO DS

Innovative features set the DS apart from the rest of the handheld pack.

Featuring dual screens, a touch-panel interface and voice recognition in addition to Game Boy Advance pak compatiblity, the innovative DS has redefined what portable gaming is all about.

GAME BOY MICRO

All the power of the Game Boy Advance, now available in a chic new design.

Now small enough to fit into any pocket, the latest member of the Game Boy family boasts a sporty new look and the ability to play the entire catalog of GBA games.

BUNDLE UP

Great games and great systems, available together at a great price.

Games and systems are like cookies and milk: You can have one without the other, but why would you? Which is why Nintendo is offering sweet deals that bundle the hottest hardware with some of today's greatest new titles and familiar favorites.

NINTENDOGS BEST FRIENDS

The Best Friends bundle includes a limited-edition DS system (in either Pearl Pink or Teal) as well as a special edition of the hit Nintendogs DS game.

MARIO KART DS BUNDLE

Get the revolutionary Wi-Fi-compatible Mario Kart DS along with an exclusive Hot-Rod Red DS system, and prepare for multiplayer kart-racing fun anywhere you desire.

POKéMON XD BUNDLE SET

This limited-edition Nintendo GameCube with a Pokémon XD faceplate also includes the exciting new RPG, Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness.

SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE BUNDLE SET

Super Smash Bros. Melee has been one of the Nintendo GameCube's biggest hits, and now you can get it included with the GCN for free.

MARIO PARTY 7 BUNDLE SET

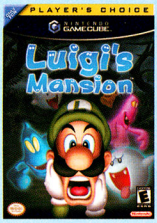
The latest installment in the genre-defining Mario Party series is available with the GCN console and an additional controller for one low price.

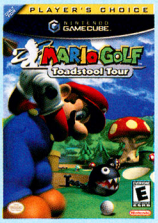
CHOICE CUTS

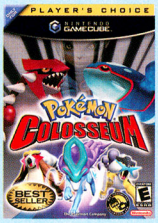
Available at a special low-price, these GCN hits make gift-giving easy.

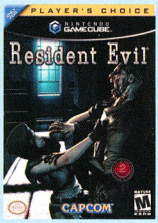
Only the most successful games get selected as Player's Choice titles. For a more extensive list, visit Nintendo.com.

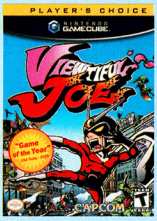
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PLAYER'S CHOICE TITLES

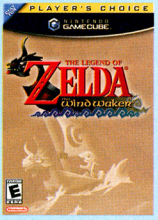


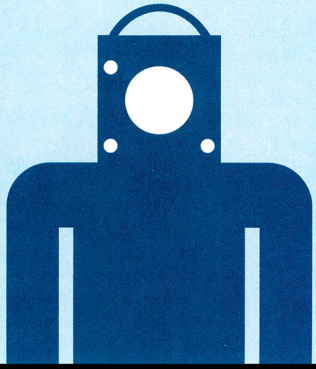












WISH LIST/GAME INDEX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

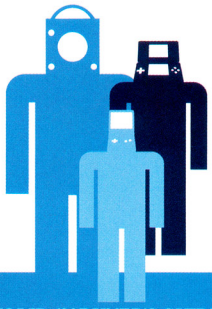
- Battalion Wars
  REVIEW • PAGE 9
- Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix REVIEW • PAGE 4
- Donkey Kong Jungle Beat
  REVIEW • PAGE 7
- FIFA Soccer 06
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Fight Night: Round 2
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
  REVIEW • PAGE 9
- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Killer 7
  REVIEW • PAGE 10
- Madden NFL 06
  REVIEW • PAGE 12
- Mario Party 7
  PREVIEW • PAGE 14
- Mario Superstar Baseball
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- NHL 06
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Peter Jackson's King Kong
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness
  REVIEW • PAGE 11
- Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Resident Evil 4
  REVIEW • PAGE 8
- Shadow the Hedgehog
  PREVIEW • PAGE 14
- Sonic Gems Collection
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Spartan: Total Warrior
  REVIEW • PAGE 6
- SSX On Tour
  REVIEW • PAGE 12
- Star Fox: Assault
  REVIEW • PAGE 10
- Super Mario Strikers
  PREVIEW • PAGE 14
- Tak: The Great Juju Challenge
  REVIEW • PAGE 7
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06
  REVIEW • PAGE 12
- Timesplitters: Future Perfect
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory REVIEW • PAGE 6
- Tony Hawk's American Wasteland
  REVIEW • PAGE 12
- Ultimate Spider-Man
  REVIEW • PAGE 6
- WWE Day of Reckoning 2
  REVIEW • PAGE 12

NINTENDO DS

- Advance Wars: Dual Strike
  REVIEW • PAGE 9
- Animal Crossing: Wild World
  PREVIEW • PAGE 14
- Battles of Prince of Persia
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Burnout Legends
  PREVIEW • PAGE 14
- Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
  REVIEW • PAGE 8
- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Kirby: Canvas Curse
  REVIEW • PAGE 7
- Kong: 8th Wonder of the World
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Lost In Blue
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Lunar: Dragon Song
  REVIEW • PAGE 11
- Madden NFL 06
  REVIEW • PAGE 12
- Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Mario Kart DS
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Meteos
  REVIEW • PAGE 9
- Metroid Prime Pinball
  REVIEW • PAGE 5
- Nanostray
  REVIEW • PAGE 10
- Nintendogs
  REVIEW • PAGE 4
- Pac-Pix
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney
  REVIEW • PAGE 5
- Sonic Rush
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- *Star Wars* Episode III: Revenge of the Sith REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Tak: The Great Juju Challenge
  REVIEW • PAGE 7
- Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory REVIEW • PAGE 6
- Tony Hawk's American Sk8land
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Trace Memory
  REVIEW • PAGE 8
- Trauma Center: Under the Knife
  REVIEW • PAGE 5
- Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble
  REVIEW • PAGE 6
- WarioWare: Touched!
  REVIEW • PAGE 5
- Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour
  REVIEW • PAGE 13

GAME BOY ADVANCE

- DK: King of Swing
  REVIEW • PAGE 7
- Donkey Kong Country 3
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Dr. Mario/Puzzle League
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Final Fantasy IV
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Gunstar Super Heroes
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- Harvest Moon: More Friends Of Mineral Town REVIEW • PAGE 11
- Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Kong: 8th Wonder of the World
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap REVIEW • PAGE 8
- Madden NFL 06
  REVIEW • PAGE 12
- Mega Man Zero 4
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Pokémon Emerald
  REVIEW • PAGE 11
- Racing Gears Advance
  REVIEW • PAGE 13
- Sigma Star Saga
  REVIEW • PAGE 10
- Tony Hawk's American Sk8land
  PREVIEW • PAGE 15
- WarioWare: Twisted!
  REVIEW • PAGE 5



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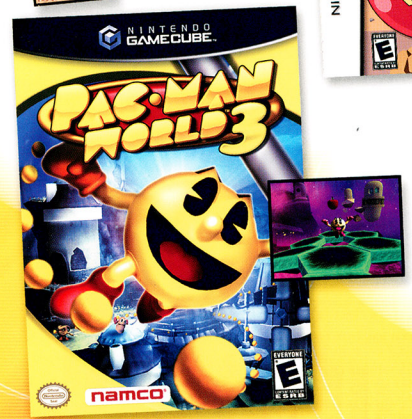

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE TO EVERYONE 10+
E-E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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NINTENDO GAMECUBE

NINTENDO DS.

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